



- **SUPERMAN IV FX**
- **BOWIE**
- **IAN RUSH**
- **BIG COUNTRY**
- **DEATH STARS**
- **THE STRANGLERS**
- **SKIING HOLIDAYS**
- **THE FALL**
- **WINTER COATS**
- **LP/VIDEO/BOOK REVIEWS**
- **JOYSTICK ROUND-UP**
- **WIN A VID!**
- **WIN A TOMATO!**
- **WIN A CURRY!**
- **REVIEW OF THE YEAR**

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# LM

**the Lively Magazine**



- **SUPERMAN**
- **BOWIE**
- **IAN RUSSELL**
- **BIG COURSE**
- **DEATH STARS**
- **THE STARS**
- **SKIING**
- **THE FA**
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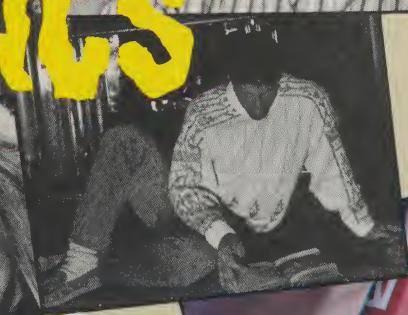
OLIVER  
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# LM

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Great title, huh? It's all about the latest winter coats from the high street shops. Beezer's the geezer on this one while Richard Lowe does his poser bit. Cheers, big ears...

WELCOME to this 80-page first issue of **LM**†.

You've probably been reading Newsfield computer mags for some time now, but you'll find **LM** is quite different. Different, because it has an aggressively personal approach; different because it is setting out to cover the widest imaginable range of life's aspects.

**LM**'s strength lies in the outlook and attitude of its writers, who have come together because they share similar views on life.

However, sharing a general view is one thing — agreeing on the detail is another, especially when the specific covers such a generality of subject material. In fighting to 'get their own way', contributors' elbows and shoulders have been rubbed raw in the conflict. The battle bodes well. I wanted to create a lively, opinionated, even brash magazine, jammed with ideas and the sense that it was getting 'inside' what it talked about, and I think you'll find this first edition of **LM** — issue zero — is certainly packed with personal feeling and opinion.

**LM** is NOT a style magazine. We don't pretend to know what you'll like (or should like), even though we'll have a damned good go at telling you we do! Well, that's not strictly true — we're only human — we do think we know what's best, but we expect to be put down, argued with, shouted at and occasionally, no doubt, we'd like some agreement. **LM** won't be preaching from a platform of 'knowingness'. Our job is to bring forward items that interest us as an editorial team and hope those subjects and our ways of looking at them interest you too.

In so doing **LM** should arouse some passions and, as the reader, you can join in the debate through the letters pages and by writing counter-arguments as articles. There are other reader-involvement areas too, such as STATION TO STATION (see page 16). Cross-opinion is what we want, so, as with the computer titles, wherever it's practicable, reviews carry the opinions of more than one critic — there you may well witness the flesh wounds caused by the clashing of individual wills!

But above all, **LM** is intended to be a packed, damned good read. I hope you find it so.

ROGER KEAN

## JANUARY 1987

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Turkey time again. Ranting Richard Lowe slags the whole thing off, while Martin Sutton suggests you go down the flicks.

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A free £19 joystick is yours free (really, absolutely free) with every subscription to LM. Accept no substitutes, LM's the real fling.

## LM — ONE OF YOUR BETTER DECISIONS

NEXT MONTH: WE ASK, IS THE PRICE OF VEGETABLES WORTH ADRIAN EDMONDSON?

MAN IN A SUITCASE packs his toothbrush and heads for the fair city of Birmingham. RANTING RICHARD LOWE boots American Football and other silly sports. LM TUNES TO 208 and finds Radio Luxembourg on the crest of a new wave.

THE VIDEO CHEAPIE SCENE. PIERCE BROSNAN chats about his role in the new British spy movie *The Fourth Protocol*.

LLOYD ANSWERS MORE of your questions, there's competitions-a-go-go and . . . oh, it'll be a lot easier if you buy the damn thing.

ISSUE 1 of LM is on sale from 15 January in all good news agents. People caught not buying their copy will be sentenced to three months of listening to Paul Strange go on about Heavy Metal music. Believe me, Siberia's the better choice.

THE RING OF CONFIDENCE GROWS WIDER — LM — IT'S THE REAL THING ALL OVER AGAIN WHITES ARE EVEN BRIGHTER WHEN YOU USE LM AND YOU THOUGHT YOUR BREATH WAS FRESH BEFORE LM I THOUGHT WAN-KING WAS A CITY IN CHINA UNTIL I READ LM IT'S PROVEN — LM READS AT LEAST TWO MILES LONGER THAN ANY OTHER COMPARABLE MAG

† Normal issues of LM will be between 112 and 124 pages.



**PHILIPS**

The twiddly bits on the D8168 were having a disturbing effect.



# UP FRONT



Three from the crowd improvise a 'vignette' (whatever that is) telling everyone how wonderful LM is going to be.

'TELL 'em how we started,' said Paul Strange. 'Tell them about The Launch.'

Those very words, with their enforced capital letters, inspire dread. For six months you think about a magazine, then for another six you plan it in more detail, and then suddenly there's no time left for thinking, for The Launch is upon you.

There are various types of launch (some float on water, others push things into water), but LM's launch was aimed at would-be advertisers, and at the trade media-moguls who ultimately decide whether you'll be pigeon-holed with *Q*, *The Face* or the *Daily Mirror* for the sheer convenience of referring to you in their erudite columns. Our launch happened on 18 September.

Being very different from your average Face In The Daily Mirror, the LM Editorial Team decided to have a rave up, and where better

than London's fashionable disco the **Camden Palace**? But a disco is a formidable place without a crowd, so pressure was put on Graeme Kidd's Rent-a-CRASH-ZZAP!-AMTIX!-mob to get some readers along for the event, and some 200 turned up.

To get things moving, **Gaz Top**—of *Get Fresh* fame—was hired and, as those who were there will know, he dashed about the place like a man possessed—moving things.

Downstairs on the disco floor, the Kidd Rentamob gyrated, banged heads and consumed burgers, while in the remoter eyries of the Palace's upper circle, the invited media mob watched and dined on cold buffet (it's a tasty dish) and sipped champers (except for Mr Minson, who gulps the stuff energetically in case it goes flat before he reaches the bottom of the glass).

The gathered forces of

LM Editorial looked on with mixed-horror (they don't like launches) as first Roger Kean (your erstwhile Editor) and then Roger Bennett (even ersterwhile Advertisement Manager) made prats of themselves at the microphone. Kean's speech was very inspiring (at least he looked pleased with himself afterwards). Bennett's was more down-to-earth—an attempt to drag money from advertisers' pockets.

During the course of the event, Gaz Top gave away loads of prizes for all sorts of silly competitions. Top prize of the day was an **MR 70** compact camera, kindly offered by **Konica UK Ltd**. The winner was **David Aston** from Canterbury, who is currently attending Portsmouth Polytechnic. We don't know what David is studying, but no doubt the camera will come in very useful. A neat device—it's fitted with 38mm and 70mm lenses, stepped



Gaz Top with David Aston, winner of the Konica MR 70 camera.

auto-focus, motorised film advance and re-wind, and automatic electronic flash.

LM readers who would like to own a Konica camera may be interested to know about the Konica Competitions we're running for the next six months—look elsewhere in UP FRONT.

The day ended at around three-thirty with the disco banging decibels at a barely bearable level—great stuff. Thanks are due to the staff of the Camden Palace for their tremendous

efforts, to Hugh for the sounds and lights, to CSL for arranging it all, and especially to Gaz, who moved so many things there weren't any LM T-shirts or caps left me.

**LLOYD MANGRAM**

Roger Kean's inspiring speech is now enshrined in the British Museum. Roger Bennett's is being serialised next year on cable TV. Hunter S Minson's champagne glass has been donated to the Muswell Hill Temperance Society, and Paul Strange's spectacles can be heard on radio every day after the news.

Your Editor, Roger Kean, addresses the faithful. They are...



## WIN A TOMATO!

KETCHUP on the latest in 35mm compact technology with this saucy new Konica Tomato camera. Thrill to the built-in electronic flash, rave over the attractive grey shoulder-pouch and save yourself £49.95 by telling us:

- a) Which photographic band is fronted by Roddy Frame?
- b) Which 1934 cartoon strip hero was brought to life by Sam J Jones in a 1980 SF film?
- c) *Freeze Frame* was a hit single for which band?

Send your answer — along with your address and details of your favourite three items in this issue of **LM** — on a postcard to Win A Tomato, **LM**, 47 Gravel Hill, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1QS. Entries must reach us by 22 December.



*She won a Tomato with LM!!*

## ON THE BUSES

Danny Kishon's new board game, 'September', looks set to become a Christmas best seller. DAVID CHEAL — our man in Wilsden with a passion for cheap curries — discovers how Danny did his market research on the back seat of a bus.

FOUR-and-a-half years ago, Danny Kishon had just left university. Fearful of settling down to a lifetime of drudgery in his chosen field, physiology and biochemistry, Danny took off to America on a cheap Laker flight and bought a Greyhound bus pass for £99. It's the cheap way to see the States: you sleep on the bus at night, and do your sightseeing during the day. There's only one snag. Because it's a cheap ticket, you can only travel on certain, often very circuitous routes; if you use the more direct 'A' routes, you have to pay extra.

Danny was frustrated, but intrigued. 'It was as though they were playing a game with me,' he says, 'trying to block off all my routes.' The germ of an idea for a new game was born.

'Most games,' he says, 'are based on chasing and killing. I thought it would be interesting to develop a game which was based on blocking your opponent.'

He came back from the States broke, on the dole and determined to develop the idea. The flat where he was staying was cold and it was difficult to work there, so Danny's girlfriend Ann bought him a monthly bus pass for September (hence the name of the game). Danny could now sit in the warmth of the bus, work on his game and test it out on passengers who sat next to him on the back seat.

'It was the ideal market research, because I played the game with everyone from kids on their way to school to old ladies out doing the shopping. I reckon I tried it out on about a thousand people.'

None of the 35 games companies to whom Danny subsequently sent the game was impressed; some of them returned it unopened. The banks were lukewarm, too. 'It's impossible,' says Danny, 'to find people to invest in a good idea. A hundred years ago things were different; that's why we've now got things like the light bulb and the motor car. But today banks and investors are only really interested in

buying and selling from each other.' So Danny spent four gruelling years raising the £25,000 he needed to launch the game himself.

Lucky for Danny, then, that he met people like the dinner party guest who played the game with him and was so impressed he wrote out a cheque for £5,000. He was one of the larger investors; many were friends who chipped in with a few quid. Then came the retailers. They, too, were sceptical at first. But Danny, still convinced that his idea was marketable, spent hours — sometimes days — in their reception foyers until the exasperated buyers finally agreed to see him. And when he did get an appointment, Danny didn't try to sell them the game; he just asked them to play it with him.

It worked. Today **September** is stocked by virtually all the major retailers (price £5.99) and has clocked up advance orders

of 110,000 — the largest advance sale ever for any game.

The game consists of a board and a set of shaped plastic pieces (which stick to the board thanks to a new chemical process called plastic migration). There are two players. One tries to map a route from the top of the board to the bottom; the other does the same from left to right. Both players also try to block off the opposing player's route. It's simple, stimulating and very addictive.

Danny is currently negotiating with Activision and Virgin on the rights for a computer version of **September**. He's wary, however, of computer games — they depend on reflexes. There are some excellent computer games around, but with many of them there's no thought involved. I prefer something which makes you think. And in general I prefer board games because they're social — you have to sit down with someone to play them.'

For Danny Kishon, the astonishing success of **September** comes after years of hard work. Now he's finally seeing the rewards. 'It was like being pregnant for four-and-a-half years,' he says, 'and now I've finally given birth. It's a great relief.'



# WALK LIKE A MAN

Clad only in a graphic equalizer, SIMON POULTER reports on personal stereos.

WHETHER you're into personal earache, Sony-style, or large-scale peace-shattering, there's something on the Christmas personal stereo market to suit both your wallet and your shoulder-muscles.

Toward the bottom of the very wide price-range, Sony's WM-33 will probably be successful, going for the same as the popular WM-22 (£29.95 — the manufacturer's recommended price, like all in this guide) but with the extra feature of a five-band graphic equalizer. For the same price, Aiwa's HSG-35 comes second with a mere

three-band equalizer.

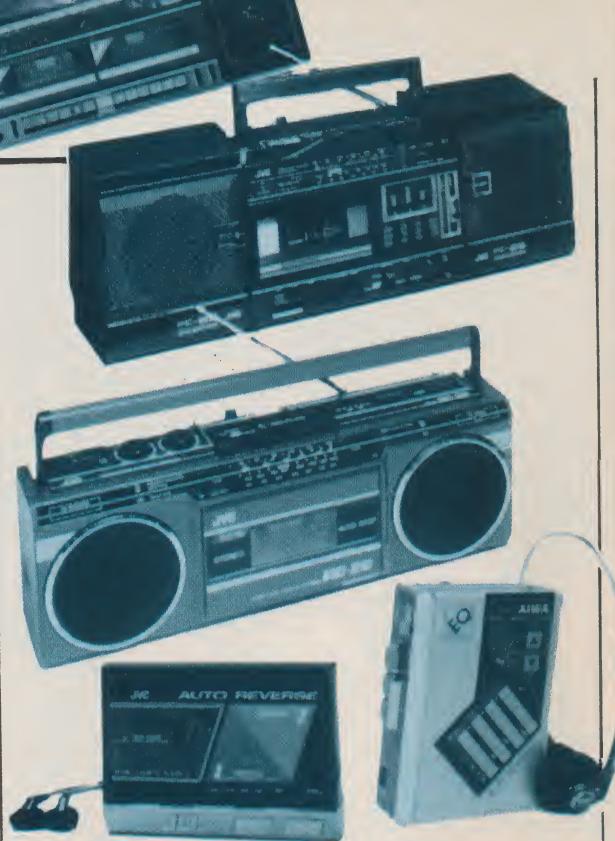
Going up a few sovs we find the Sony WM-31FS (£34.95), which attaches a basic Walkman to a speaker package; this one will make you really popular in an early-morning commuter train.

Sony continue their master plan to take over the world with portable entertainment. Following their successful Sports Walkman, the Floating Walkman (the WM-35) and the Watchman, they have the Sony CFS-950 (£129.95), a splashproof version of their other popular new launch, the £49.95

Sony CFS-230L (which entertains your fearless listener day and night). The CFS-950 comes in yellow and white.

JVC offer two versions of their personal stereo, the JVC CX-5K and the CX-5FK. Both these models feature auto reverse, Dolby B, metal-tape compatibility and earphones; the CX-5FX also has a built-in FM radio. The JVCs are the most compact of the new personal stereos (not much larger than a cassette and only 185g), but at £65 and £98 respectively they may be a bit pricey.

The range of ghetto-blasters looks more like the Battersea Dogs' Home resident list — woofers and super-woofers everywhere. Hitachi are the chief perpetrators, blasting ghettos like there's no tomorrow with an extensive range of musical juggernauts. Most likely to cause hernias is the Hitachi TRK-3D8 at £129.99 and 6.9kg — and that's including eight, yes, eight batteries. This colossus also has the unique 3-D feature — two three-watt



speakers and one eight-watt speaker for that extra dimension. Arf, arf.

JVC's ever-expanding range of portable stereos moves into alternative design with the oddly attractive wedge-shaped JVC PC-25 (£69). Its Sony equivalent, the Sony CFS-4000L, goes for £99, but the five-band graphic equalizer, auto reverse and automatic search function are worth the extra £30. The JVC RC-20 is another

new addition to the catalogue — but it looks like a hurriedly-produced version of the Sony CFS-230L, and it's a cheeky £55.

Finally, with Aiwa's CA-W30 Carry Component System you get a value-for-£99.95 package: a four-band radio, a twin cassette deck with high-speed dubbing, detachable two-way speakers and a five-band graphic equalizer.

Stick that in your deck and play it.

## HALINA ZOOM INTO COLOUR

CAMERA colours used to have as much variety as the Ford motor company — you could have any colour you liked as long as it was black!

Market research has convinced Japanese manufacturers that younger photographers want gear that's a bit more stylish. As a result there's been a flood of compact-type cameras in every conceivable hue during the past year or so, and Halina is the latest company to catch on to the idea that brighter colours make for bigger sales.

Their excellent little 160 compact — featuring built-in flash, a lens protection blind and a fixed-focus shutter — has just been made available in red, with a classy white version due to follow in November. It costs a very reasonable £22.95.

Rather more up-market, and with a whole host of extra gadgets, (automatic film loading, film rewind-



ing, and 'DX' coding sensors that automatically pick up which type of film is being used), the Halina SPEEDX 66 costs £49.95. Originally available just in black, it's now been re-launched in red just in time for Christmas.

Finally there's the AF 810, priced at £59.95. This has all the features of the other two, plus auto-focus.

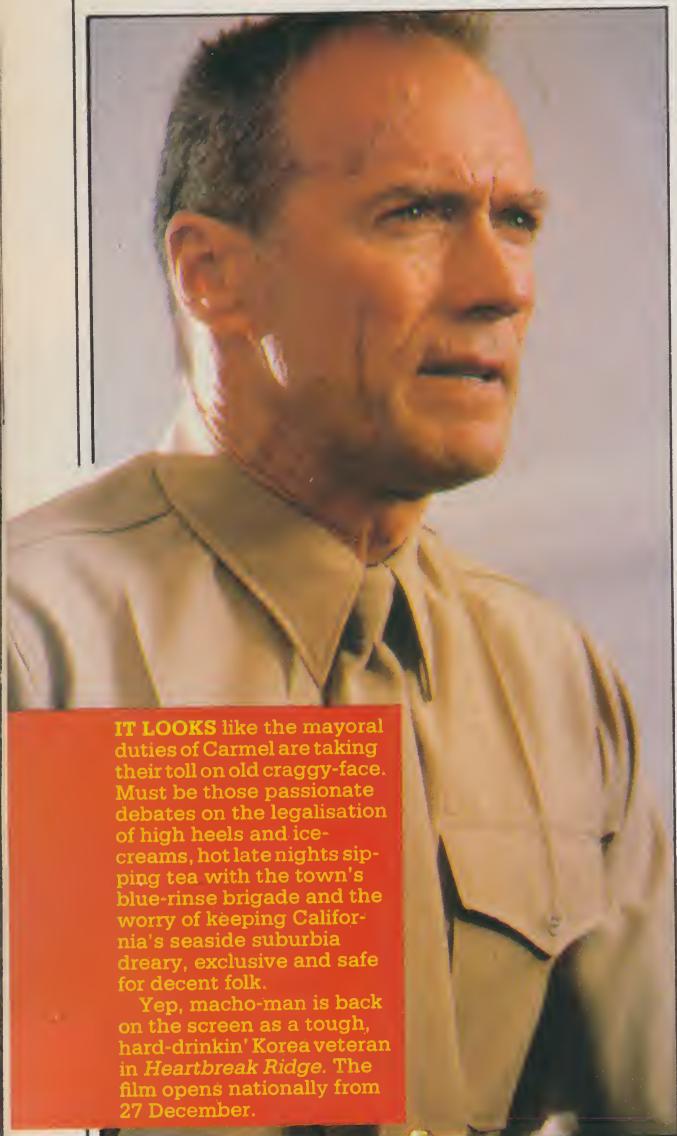
Launched earlier this year in black, a red version has just come onto the market, due to be followed by a model in burgundy, rumoured to be the most successful colour scheme of all.

Halina reckon that half their camera sales are coloured models, and it's a figure that's bound to rise.

TERRY HOPE

IT LOOKS like the mayoral duties of Carmel are taking their toll on old craggy-face. Must be those passionate debates on the legalisation of high heels and ice-creams, hot late nights sipping tea with the town's blue-rinse brigade and the worry of keeping California's seaside suburbia dreary, exclusive and safe for decent folk.

Yep, macho-man is back on the screen as a tough, hard-drinkin' Korea veteran in *Heartbreak Ridge*. The film opens nationally from 27 December.



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## TRASHTOWN ROCK

LOOKING for some unusual entertainment in London around Christmas? Try the **Half Moon Theatre** in Mile End, where you can experience an authentic Jamaican pantomime, *Flash Trash*, written by Barbara Gloudon, with music by **Felix Cross**.

When Jamaicans first started performing pantomimes, they stuck to the format of the traditional English panto, with principle boys, dames, ugly sisters and so on. but during the last 50 years they've developed their own distinctive form of show.

Aimed as much at adults as at children, it's one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Jamaica, as well as being an enormous tourist attraction.



'The kids go along for the music,' says director **Yvonne Brewster**, 'but it's really an adult affair.'

The plot of *Flash Trash* is an uncomplicated story of the poor people of Trashtown, their struggle for survival, and how they come into contact with their oppressors, the rich inhabitants of Ready Heights, where King Nuff is looking for a suitable suitor for his horrible daughter.

The production bears many similarities to English panto, but it's based, says Yvonne, more on folklore than on nursery rhymes. 'It's a morality play,' she says, 'with none of the vulgarity of the English pantomime.'

*Flash Trash* was first performed in Jamaica last Christmas, and features a cast of 20 plus a live four-piece reggae band. And don't be put off by the title; in Jamaica, 'trash' means rough, but good.

*Flash Trash* is at the **Half Moon Theatre**, 213 Mile End Road, London, E1 4AA (tel: 01-790 4000) from 16 December to 24 January.

DAVID CHEAL

# STAR CRA



The DH Martial Arts Centre in London's Carnaby Street: only one of many shops in Britain now selling potentially lethal weapons.

ON a chilly Saturday in October, 13-year-old Max Fluckiger strolled into a shop in central London and emerged with a carrier bag full of lethal weapons.

In the shop, DH Martial Arts of Carnaby Street, no attempt was made to ask Max his age or to find out what possible use a north London schoolboy would have for a selection of sharp metal throwing discs and a Chinese rice flail—despite recent Home Office attempts to ensure that such weapons are only sold to bona fide martial artists over the age of 18.

Prompted by reports that the easy availability of these so-called 'death stars' was likely to lead to an outbreak of violent street crime, the Home Office drew up a voluntary code of conduct for retailers in January.

The code stipulates that weapons should only be sold to over 18s who belong to a recognised martial arts club (membership cards should be shown at the time of purchase).

But Max's shopping trip (LM asked him to buy the weapons for the purpose of this article) indicates that the code of conduct needs toughening up.

A Home Office spokesman told LM: 'We find it very disappointing that some traders appear to be ignoring the guidelines we have drawn up. We will follow up any evidence of this happening with the trader concerned. We are keeping the matter under review.'

The Code of Conduct was drawn up by the Home Office after consultation with the Martial Arts Com-



13-year-old Max Fluckiger with the rice flail and 'death star' he should never have been allowed to purchase.

In the hands of a lout the rice flail, or *nunchaku*, can be very dangerous indeed, while the 'death star', or *shuriken*, can do appalling damage when thrown, even if the blades are not fully sharpened.

mission, the sport's governing body in this country, and retailers. Richard Thomas, a member of the MAC's executive, thinks legislation is necessary. He was appalled that Max had been able to buy such weapons.

'I find it amazing that anyone could be so irresponsible. DH Martial Arts should know better. If the guidelines we have prepared with the Home Office had been met, there would be no need for legislation.'

Neither the Home Office nor the police keep detailed statistics on crime relating to offensive weapons, so it's impossible to find out exactly how many attacks have been committed by people using martial arts equipment.

Despite a new code of conduct, 'death star' weapons appear to be freely available to anyone who wants to buy them. Most of these weapons have a legitimate place in supervised martial arts training sessions, but in the wrong hands they could be extremely dangerous. **MARK EDMONDS** investigates. Pictures by **BEEZER**.



with the order, but others are less exacting.

Bruce Ayling, publisher of *Fighters* (a magazine which carries a number of advertisements for martial arts weapons), maintains that his advertisers are responsible, but some of the ads in the magazine make no reference to the code of conduct.

'We can't make it mandatory,' he says, 'because that would be an infringement of the Restriction of Trade Act, but the majority of advertisers in *Fighters* would not be prepared to sell dangerous weapons to people who are not genuine martial artists.'

Heather Croft, of Giko Martial Arts, a Birmingham-based company, regularly advertises her firm's wares in magazines such as *Fighter*. She says that Giko carries out the code of conduct to the letter: 'For one thing, our shop is very close to a police station so anyone who walked out of the shop openly carrying a rice flail or death star would probably get picked up for having an offensive weapon. We get a lot of 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds coming into the shop and we refuse to serve them.'

Much of the controversy in the press over martial arts weapons has centred

with shuriken and rice flails and lurk around the woods when it's dark.'

The £6.99 rice flail, or *nunchaku*, which Max bought from DH Martial Arts is also a ninja weapon, though the one he chose was painted with a Union Jack — a symbol which seems to have little connection with ancient martial arts. Recognised clubs teach the use of the flail in martial arts systems such as karate, but in the hands of a lout the flail can be a very dangerous weapon indeed.

The *nunchaku* is similar in design to the implements first used centuries ago by Chinese peasants to grind rice. Their flails doubled as handy weapons with which the peasants could defend themselves against rival gangs. It looks like a double truncheon, joined in the middle with a robust metal chain.

LM approached the assistant who sold Max the weapons to find out DH's policy on selling to those under 18. The assistant pointed to a notice on her counter which said that under 18s would not be served. She said the manager was away; we welcome his comments.

Whether or not Max's shopping trip will have any bearing on the politicians and mandarins at the Home Office remains to be seen. Labour Home Affairs spokesman Clive Soley MP told LM he was not convinced that legislation was the answer.

'Before any legislation, I think it's important that we have an intelligent debate about these weapons. Unfortunately, it's impossible to legislate against real criminal behaviour, and if someone wants to assault someone else they will probably do so, irrespective of the weapons available. Bread knives are good for cutting bread. They shouldn't be banned just because some people use them for stabbing their granny.'

As we went to press, the Home Office said that they were in the process of approaching DH Martial Arts with LM's evidence. The Department of Trade and Industry's Trading Standards Officer may also decide to pay the shop a visit.

'The ninja fantasy appeals to Walter Mitty types,' he says. 'We don't recognise any groups which practise ninjutsu, but we're certain that a lot of people like to dress up in black hoods, arm themselves

LM

around the death stars, or shuriken, partly because they are available so easily and cheaply. A death star can cost as little as £1.'

Although many of the weapons on sale in this country have a legitimate place in the training sessions run by recognised clubs, Richard Thomas says that shuriken are rarely used by genuine martial artists. 'Only one or two people in this country know how to use these stars properly. A death star, like any projectile, can be highly dangerous. You could easily take out a person's eye, even if the death star's edges weren't particularly sharp. The majority of death stars are bought by people with no interest in martial arts.'

The martial arts are currently enjoying a boom — more than 4,000 clubs in this country are registered with the MAC. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the current boom is the *ninja* craze.

In medieval Japan, the *ninja* were a secret society of assassins, willing to bump off anyone — for a price. They would operate at night, clad in a menacing black uniform which included a full-face hood. Ninja traditions are said to have survived Japan's turbulent history and rumours abound that units of *ninja* were attached to the Japanese Imperial Army in the Second World War. James Clavell's novel *Shogun* and the TV series *The Master* (Lee Van Cleef played a *ninja* chief) have also contributed to the *ninja*'s notoriety.

Many of the weapons on sale in martial arts shops are replicas of those used by the *ninja*. Richard Thomas of the MAC is convinced that the mystique surrounding them has led to more people (under-18s included) wanting to ape *ninja* activities.

'The *ninja* fantasy appeals to Walter Mitty types,' he says. 'We don't recognise any groups which practise ninjutsu, but we're certain that a lot of people like to dress up in black hoods, arm themselves

# Word up

My cup runneth over. Before long I'll be running all of Newsfield. Only AMTIX! escapes my grasp, but the egregious Saffron Trevaskis seems to have it sewn up. Never mind, I've got LM. Let's be having your letters as fast as you can, otherwise Roger (who moves from mag to mag) Kean will make me redundant. And you won't lose out either. I'll be picking out a letter of especial merit each month and that will earn its writer the princely sum of £19.99 — just like the letter which follows . . .

## ALL CHANGE

Dear Lloyd,  
Following the recent introduction of the pound and two-pound coins, isn't it time the Government introduced the 99p coin? With so many shops charging anything from 99p to £199.99 for their goods, a 99p coin would dispense with the need for the nation's hard-pressed shopkeepers and assistants to hand out a penny change on every purchase.

Penny Dreadful, Church Lane, Tunbridge Wells

Yes, but just think how boring life at the checkout would become. No more hanging around, chatting to the other waiting customers while the cashier tries to work out how much change you're expecting from eight purchases each costing something and 99p. However, Penny, your £20 note (I lied at the top) is on its way.

■ LM

## DADDY SHORT LEGS

Dear Lloyd,  
I'm thinking of starting a new organisation and I'm hoping that some of your readers will be interested in joining it. Essentially it's a pressure group which will make clothing manufacturers more aware of the need to produce clothes in a wider variety of sizes than at present.

It's particularly hard to get jeans to fit if you're a small person. Jean manufacturers seem to think that everyone has an inside leg measurement no smaller than 32 inches, but of course there are thousands of people around with shorter inside legs.

I've taken up the legs on all my jeans (normally I use that iron-on stuff), but when I've paid between

£15 and £20 for a pair, I don't expect to have to make alterations. For that price the things should fit first time, around the waist, around the bum and on the leg.

I would like to see certain manufacturers boycotted, letters sent to managing directors and demonstrations staged outside their factories. Perhaps there will be some action once the public and manufacturers are aware of the situation.

Matthew Smale, Erridge Road, London SW19

Britain's always been a bit behind when it comes to trousers. In New York you can buy jeans of almost any length in each waist size. LM welcomes your pressure group, Matthew, and more power to your inside leg, I say.

■ LM

## SHAME ON YOU

Dear Lloyd,  
I thought you'd be interested to know that I saw the first issue of your magazine back in September. On the front cover it said 'Dummy Issue'. Is that the way to refer to your loyal readers, the people who pay for your bread and Marmite?

I hope that in the future, to redress the balance and to compensate for this appalling slur on the intelligence of the British public, you'll be having an 'Intellectual Issue', with features about why Marcel Proust liked cake and why Roget's Thesaurus became extinct all those millions of years ago.

Gordon Bennett, Cowdenbeath

Your prayers are answered, Gordon. Feast your eyes over this very issue which even now you hold in your sweaty palms.

Revel in its essential, intellectual qualities, devour its Proustian angst, swim in its Pre-cambrian lakes of mythical beauty, feed with the Thesauruses in their pre-Roget state of innocent bliss, deep in the primeval swamps of unmitigated culture.

■ LM

## UNSMART

Dear Lloyd,  
If I had my way, the following charter would be enforced on all youth-culture magazines:  
1) No politics.  
2) No smart-assed Julie Bur-chill.  
3) No smart-assed letter replies.

For some reason these seem to be trendy necessities for 'pop' rags, and it don't wash. LM is young and apparently 'upfront'; don't let it become the same as the rest.

Martin Fossy, on the dole in Basildon

It's simply not in my nature to give what you quaintly refer to as 'smart-assed' replies. If by 'politics' you mean Mr Hat-tersly, have no fear; and when we've got Richard Lowe on the editorial team, who needs Julie Bur-chill?

■ LM

## FUN BOY THREE

Dear Lloyd,  
Why don't you have a column on word associations in your magazine? It's great fun boy three bags full on the hill street blues woke up this morning has broken the silence is golden wonder of Woolies bully for you and me and a dog named boo to a goose that laid the golden egg, sausage, chips and beans on toast rack and ruin.

What do you think?  
Brian Cell, Stockton-on-Teesmaid

It's the sort of thing that sticks in your throat swallow antiperistalsis puke throw up and catch the ball by the bearings starits dire in trouble pain agony aunts and cousins relativity equals mc square old fashioned and generally boring.

However, what do other readers think brain?

■ LM

You wanna write, right? Well write to LLOYD MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. I'm open to almost anything except smart-assed letters. There I agree.

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Mangram's letters pages. We want to know what you think of the music you play, films and videos you watch, television programmes, computer games, holiday resorts, politicians (just about everything in fact) as well as voting in the various reader charts.

And all this comes in 12 action-packed issues a year for £15 (post included). Your monthly copy will be posted to you direct from the printer so you get it before it appears on the street.\*\*\*

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# STATION GO STATION

LM's regular monthly round up of what's happening, what's on, who's doing what, what's hip and what isn't, and the best places to visit around the country.



## BIRMINGHAM

# More to Brum than brmmm brmmms

IT'S hip to live in Birmingham again. Okay, so it's still got a slum problem, high unemployment areas, low wage sweatshops and riot zones, but things are starting to move.

The city is adapting to a changing environment: new ideas and directions are being explored in many areas, some more visible

than others.

The cleared slums and industrial waste lands are now no longer eyesores to moan about over a pint of mild in the Dog And Colonoscopy. The land has become a valuable opportunity to add something fresh and smart to the new Birmingham.

Brummies themselves

are changing their outlook. They have traditionally combined a quiet stoicism and grudging acceptance of their shabby environs into a paranoid self-depreciation, but a younger and more positive approach is now starting to make an impression on the affairs of the city. The result is that Brummies are beginning to assign more worth to themselves and their city.

Brummies don't burn with the fierce local pride that can light up even the most down-trodden Geordie or Scouser. Instead they have adopted an almost apologetic approach to the outside world; never fully convinced of their heritage, not wanting to sing the praises of living in Birmingham, because in the eyes of the average Brummie there is nothing to sing about.

And yet actually Birmingham has a lot going for it. The city has the best exhibition complex in Europe;



A few mechanics from The Garage.

the International Arena (the UK's premier large live music venue) is part of this complex, while the city also has some of the best art galleries, theatres and orchestras in the country.

Birmingham is at the heart of an impressive and improving communications network, now boasting a top class international airport. Recent events such as the Super Prix motor race and the well-orchestrated bid for the 1992 Olympic Games have begun to restore the citizens' faith in themselves and their 'hometown'.

Birmingham is becoming an exciting and vibrant place to live. It's coming to life, shaking off its former drab self-degrading image and proclaiming its prowess as a sparkling centre of social innovation and exploration; a living, breathing entity undergoing an exciting and dynamic reformation.

STEVE KNIGHT

## NOTTINGHAM

# Myths, legends and the real truth

IT'S a cast iron certainty.

Say 'Nottingham' to anyone not fully conversant with the more northern outposts of the M1, and they'll say 'Robin Hood'. Like a conversational equivalent of the knee jerk reflex, Robin Hood is normally quickly followed by 'Brian Clough', 'Torville and Dean' and a recitation of the old myth 'seven girls to every bloke'.

People know very little about Nottingham. neither north nor south, east nor west, and queuing up meekly behind Birmingham for the honour of being 'conveniently central', Nottingham is to England what the Liberal Party is to politics.

But don't let that put you off — get out your 'things to do' list and put Nottingham about fifth.

If you're coming for a drink, come early. Nottingham pubs always close at 10.30. (This makes for pretty wild New Year celebrations!) So just as the old four pint finger tingle is creeping up on you — or more importantly just as your mate was finally going to get his round in — you are gently (!) cajoled on to the cold Nottingham streets.

But as one pub closes, so two clubs open. And if you're prepared to dive into the piranha pool of activity that is Nottingham at night, picking your way over newly New Delhi decorated pavements and through gaggles of girls clip-clipping to the bus stop, the choice of clubs is astounding.

There are yer clean cut, aftershave and advocaat clubs (**Madisons**, **Easy Streets** and **Liberty's**), but Nottingham's claim to fame is **The Garage**. A labyrinthine collection of dingy bars and low-ceilinged, low life dance floors, there's hip hop and funk upstairs, be-bop and punk downstairs with five bars in between. There's also a bizarre door policy based entirely on footwear. I've not yet worked out which shoes they especially object to, but to play safe I'd pack your trusty, dusty DM's.

Nottingham is bursting out of a nutshell. And not a mention yet of **Forest**, **Rock City** or **Yates Wine Lodge**. You'll have to see for yourself, but don't mention Robin Hood!

PAUL TUCKER

NOTTINGHAM's music scene has been in dire straits for years, but has recently been given a much needed kick up the backside by the appearance of Phil, old guard promoter and manager of **Russell's Bar**. Rus-



Clint Bestwood And The Mescal Marauders in action.

Photograph by Maria Bestwood

sell's is minutes from the city centre but far enough away to keep the weekend thugs out of the picture. Thanks to Phil's live music policy it's now possible to see a band nearly every night, free.

Many new bands have crawled out of the woodwork: **The Dinosaurs**, **The Joints**, **Charnel House**, **Suicide Dance**, **Fairground**, **Shave Tail Temptation**, **Clint Bestwood And The Mescal Marauders**, **Apache Dance**, **Lipstick Killers**, **Big Bandit**, **That Sucker Punch**, **Marcel Marceau Sound**, **Dream**, **Every New Dead Ghost**, **Scarehunters**, **Roads To Rome**, **Animals Of Leisure**, **Sic Boy Federation**, **The Legendary Dolphins** and **The John Noakes Experience** to name but twenty.

As is often the case, many of these bands are a good argument for euthanasia, consisting of ageing musos desperately trying to up-date their act. Even some of the younger groups feature that despicable Trans-Atlantic bland sound which carries the power of a non-alcoholic punch and is an ideal beverage for major label A&R men.

Of the better groups, **Apache Dance** appear to be U2-derived drivel, while **Shave Tail Temptation** are an unholy alliance between Sigue Sigue Sputnik and George Formby. **Fairground** have recently dropped their Talking Heads' affliction, trading it in for some second hand Doors and Bunnymen albums. This makes them slightly less pretentious but still not very original.

**Clint Bestwood And The Mescal Marauders** are currently talk of the town. A ten-piece comprising ex-**Howdy Boys**, **The Media**, **Perfect Party**, **One Million Fuzztone Guitars**, **Infant Crocodiles**, etc, they've been in more bands than a hot AC30. They like a drink or 12 and it shows in their shambolic performances verging on genius: The Marauders make The Pogues look like a Temperance band. They play C&W covers almost adequately and their spiritual reference points are the three giants of country music — Johnny, Jack and Jim (Johnny Cash, Jack Daniels and Jim Beam). Together they provide a sour mash that kicks like a cowgirl at her first dance.

Catch them soon, there's a hefty reward to be had.

PAUL EDMONDSON

## WATFORD

# Filling in the gaps

WATFORD has been the butt of many a Londoner's joke for years. Some consider it a fringe part of the capital, while others prefer to believe that Watford inhabits its own cosmos and marks the last signpost

to nether regions.

In truth Watford is 20 minutes from Euston (by train), and is just a step or two from mega-city hustle. A large proportion of the population is young and affluent, and almost every

bar is sculptured to appeal to a youthful patronage.

The young swarm around modern pubs, clubs and bistros such as **Paradise Lost** (a glitzy, sterile meat market of the Hippodrome mould), **PJ's** (**Cheers** reincarnated), and **Crowns**.

Saturday sees a regular ritual march to and from the Vicarage Road football ground to support a prime example of community spirit. It's all very civilized with family outings, lots of scarves etc, and (perhaps not entirely due to the

heavy police markers), no trouble whatsoever.

Watford has its heroes — Elton John, of course, who must be one of the best public relations icons the town has ever had. There's also the 'I went to school with/cut the hair of/once got drunk with/saw him with his trousers down/George Michael' syndrome.

Despite traces of the London ice, The Watford Zone is often a void of indifference, although a relatively safe and often mildly stimulating place to live.

DAVID CURRIE

# STATION to STATION

## DUBLIN

# All cold on the Irish front

THE climate has never been as cold in Ireland as it has been this winter; mind you, the weather hasn't been so good either.

Socially, politically and financially, the climate has been rapidly deteriorating, and looks set to continue this way.

The Government are about to fall from office, the social calendar is almost empty, and with a new budget on the way the hard-earned wage packet is about to become even less meaningful. The constant Irish media obsession with the 'despondent Irish youth doing little or nothing to help themselves or the country', looks set to boom.

As the popularity of Premier Garret Fitzgerald diminishes daily, (both with the electorate and his own party members), and the present balance of power held by the Fine Gael/Labour coalition is just one seat, the Irish people are assured of an election during the next couple of months. It could take place in January. A change of government, in favour of Fianna Fail and their leader Charles Haughey, looks imminent.

Just as certain and casting a dark shadow over the country is the daunting fact that a new government will bring along a new budget. Most likely to be hit are the usual necessities—drink, cigarettes, petrol (for which we are already paying £3 per gallon), and of course a hype of the taxes on such items as records and concert tickets.

Apparently the Government are under the impression that it's the young people of the country who have all the wealth. A sobering thought, considering the £1.50 plus that we pay for a pint of beer today will probably rise just when the holiday season is coming along.

On the entertainment front, December and January are no different to any other years...empty. With only two sizeable theatres in Dublin, the choice of entertain-

Courtesy of the Irish Tourist Board



Trinity College, Dublin.

ment is extremely limited. The Olympia Theatre (capacity 1,800), is presenting the childrens' musical *Bugsy Malone*, while the Gaiety Theatre (capacity 1,500), sees Maureen Potter (Ireland's leading female satirical comic), starring in her 21st pantomime.

Rock and pop fans, familiar with Dublin's lack of concert venues (and only one of these capable of holding crowds bigger than 8,000), have very little to look forward to. The main attractions are (wait for it) **A-Ha**, **Joan Armatrading**, **Suzanne Vega** and **Huey Lewis And The News**. Fans of a heavier brand of sounds can get their denim and leather out for **Magnum** and **Tropicana**, who appear in January.

A much awaited announcement is the line-up of acts to appear at Ireland's premier rock festival in Slane village next year. There's tremendous speculation surrounding the line-up, with hints that **David Bowie**, **Dire Straits** or **The Rolling Stones** could headline. The one day event should draw 85,000 people; an official announcement of the line-up is expected in late January.

Cinema-wise, there are very few new releases expected in December, although there will be a large number of titles left over from the Dublin Film festival which finished in November.

By the first bells of 87, or even at the end of January, Ireland will know who's to govern them for the next four years. There again, maybe they won't. Either way, it's not going to bother most youngsters, for Ireland has a very low vote count with under 25-year-olds.

The silly season will come and go, the climate will remain cold, the bars, price increases and all, will remain full and the mood for the best part will be as jovial as any other bleak winter. We've grown well used to them.

JOHN O'CONNOR

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME

# Stoking up the Smellies

**NIGHTLIFE** doesn't abound in Newcastle-Under-Lyme. Most of the hot-spots are to be found above sewer drains and outside chip shops, but if you're desperate you can try **The Place** (which has been around for ages), or **Shelleys**, a relatively new and alternative night-spot in Longton. **Fuzzbox** are having a Christmas Fancy Dress Ball at Shelleys on 2 December.

Other gig highpoints are **Spear Of Destiny** (Hanley Victoria Hall, 20 December) and the return of **Gary Glitz**.

Radio Stoke's Mark Stewart.



ter (Hanley Victoria Hall, 22 December). The town has a friendly atmosphere, best appreciated on its market days (Monday, Friday and Saturday). A few years

back the place abounded with Fribbs (nee Hippies) from the University Of Keele, but sadly Keele is now full of very conservative foreign and business students. The few latter day Fribbs that do exist have been re-named 'Smellies' and they mingle with the mish-mash of fashionable-adolescent-peer groups who adopt various poses around the town.

Despite the town's conservative air, there's the odd hint of innovation. Newcastle-Under-Lyme College has just started an intriguing course on The Beatles, while Radio Stoke's **Mark Stewart** presents a highly recommendable alternative radio show, 'Stoke It Up', on Tuesdays, 6pm to 7pm. Compared with most of the local radio muzak, 'Stoke It Up' is like a dose of salts and by gum do we need it!

GARY MARSH

Principal Photographs

## NORWICH

# The boomtown bats on...

NORWICH is fairly busy during December, with a mass of events taking place at the **Norwich Arts Centre**.

Housed since 1978 in a converted church, the NAC was formerly known as Premises and was originally a haven for hippies and vegies. The name change has signalled some startling innovations (meat on the menu and CD-generated muzak!), but whether this is more than cosmetic surgery, designed to give the place a higher profile, remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the NAC is always worth a visit.

Forthcoming NAC events include the **New Portrait Photography** exhibition (1-23 December) featuring top photographers covering the spectrum from *Vogue* to *I-D*, while **News Review** (6 December) are a quick fire satirical company. Celebrate (or obliterate) the approach of Christmas at one—or both—of the NAC parties (19, 20 December).

NAC also provides local bands with an accessible venue. Newcomers—like **Dig Those Heels**, **Giant** and **Browning Version**—look set to join established names like **Gee Mr Tracy** on the Norwich music scene. Wide-eyed and sometimes

**Gee Mr Tracy**—Brick Smith



# Santa's sack and Cilla's back

legless, GMT specialise in songs full of painful puns and pleasurable word play — nonsense rhymes containing an off-centre insight.

For national bands look no further than the **University Of East Anglia**, the best gig in Norwich. In December UEA present a superb reggae package headlined by **Sly and Robbie** (2), plus the **Human League** (3), **Hawkwind** (5) and **Gary Glitter** (12, 13).

NAC and UEA aside, smaller venues (in the form of pubs and clubs) also promote an irregular supply of gigs with the emphasis on rising indie bands.

Meanwhile, the spirited Norwich Venue Campaign (supported by a six figure grant), forges ahead with building a major social and musical centre. The building has a projected opening date of September 1987 and some observers — notably the arts listings magazine **City Wise** — have detected a trend in all this activity: Norwich as the East Anglian boomtown powered by commercial expansion and improved communications.

To get a proper perspective however, you need to set this swell of optimism against the steady decline in job prospects. A quick look at the city's graffiti says it all: I spotted a pavement drawing entitled *Something To Brighten Up Your Day* while nearby daubed on a wall was 'Buskers demand double money on Saturday. Pay up or else'.

A sign of the times: one unwilling to stand and wait, the other content to be walked over. The writing is on the wall (or on the pavement).

PAUL CARPENTER

ALL right, here we go: Santa is on his way with the usual sack of goodies and should just about arrive at the usual time, provided the police don't stop him for shooting up...

It's the old familiar routine, you spend 360 days avoiding certified gheks, and what happens? They all end up starring in the Xmas panto. Pull back the screens and cue **Cilla Blind Date Black** rubbing her enormous shoulders against Aladdin and his wonderful lamp at the **Empire** for six weeks from 18 December. And to add insult to injury, **Lindisfarne** (ask your Dad) bring their Christmas show into the Pool on 9 December.

'And what did you get for Christmas little boy?', asked Santa.

'Well I got Derek Hatton by the balls, and I'm putting them somewhere safe 'til after the General Election,' replied Neil.

However despite this nasty accident, rumour has it that Derek had foreseen losing his manhood, and with the aid of modern technology transplants or sperm banks cannot be ruled out at this moment. So we may not have heard the last of the Big M in Merseyside.

On the film front there's rumours about a multi-screen cinema complex near the newly transformed Albert Dock. **Glenda Jackson** is also in town working on *Business As Usual* (directed by Lezli Ann Barrett), so have those Equity cards at the ready.

Oh, and here's the main item of this report — **A-Ha** are sold out...

That's it for now.

NEIL HUGHES

GOOD or bad, there's always something happening in Liverpool.

Every year we have an annual crisis, or three. For the last few years, there's been the 'budget crisis' (where's the Council going to get money from?), and since the abolition of Merseyside County Council there's been the 'funding crisis' (where are the theatres going to get money from?). Then there's the football season, let alone The Beatles' Convention.

Since the days of punk, Liverpool has had plenty of rehearsal and recording studios, radio programmes,

Margi Clarke and Alexander Pigg in 'Letter To Brezhnev'.



Photograph by Brian Maher



Liverpool's Half Man Half Biscuit.

and record labels (Probe Plus — home of **Half Man Half Biscuit** — being one), but live venues are currently a bit thin on the ground. Clubs come and go with alarming regularity these days, though the **World Downstairs** at the **Royal Court** is a good free night out with local music, while the **Monro** in Chinatown is taking over as the hippest, if intermittent, pub venue in town.

Theatre is prominent in Liverpool. There are two well-known producing houses in the **Playhouse** (which celebrated its 75th anniversary in November) and there's the trendy **Everyman**. They're not just for the culture vultures either. Both try to appeal to young people, and generally manage it, but best of all they both have very good youth theatres where you can do it for yourself.

It could lead somewhere. **Cathy Tyson**, star of the film *Mona Lisa*, started at the Everyman Youth Theatre, as did several of the *Brookside* cast.

Liverpool's contribution to our small screens covers comedy and drama as well as soap, of course. And then there's the big screen too: *Letter To Brezhnev* took the film world by storm last year. Its Scouse star, **Margi Clarke**, claimed at the time that 'everyone in Liverpool has a film script in their back pocket'.

A lot of people would like to think they have. It's not always a good thing: there's a lot of what playwright Willy Russell calls 'art in the head' around.

Liverpool people do tend to be wits, half-wits or pretentious prats. That's one thing that the TV comedy *Help* got right. But at least nobody has the monopoly on doing things. Willy Russell started work as a hairdresser and got into theatre via folk singing. Theatre, music and the rest belong in the same world here, and whether it's writers' groups, Youth Theatre, a Mersey TV training scheme, or a band, the possibilities are all there.

PENNY KILEY

## EDINBURGH

# Learning a fling or two

EDINBURGH comes alive every August for the International Festival — a jamboree of theatre, cinema and cabaret — but Scotland's capital is amply endowed with year-round leisure pursuits, trivial or otherwise.

The 3,000 seater **Playhouse** is one of the largest theatres in the country and is a prime venue for rock tours, often hosting a band's only Scottish date. Recent Playhouse visitors have included **Big Audio Dynamite**, **UB40**, **A-Ha**, **Elvis Costello** and **The**

**Communards**. The **Psychedelic Furs** appear there on 16 December.

The Edinburgh club scene is ever-changing, but of the more established locations, **The Hoochie Coochie Club** continues as a hip champion of alternative, non-pop rock music. The club features new and exciting live bands on Fridays. **Fire Island** is the city's largest and liveliest gay venue, while **The Amphitheatre** and **Zenatec** are highly rated straight discos.

Scots are staunch supporters of local cinema and although there have been the inevitable closures north of the border the average Scot will still attend the cinema three times more often than his English counterpart. Edinburgh is fortunate in having not only the Cannon and Rank chain venues but a number of enterprising independents, including

the recently reopened **Cameo** and the **Filmhouse** (which may host a *Guardian* Lecture with director **Martin Scorsese** early in the New Year).

Current mainstream theatrical offerings are less than edifying (a *Cinderella* panto and a live version of *The Muppet Show!*), but there are innovative and influential theatrical establishments such as the **Traverse** and **Theatre Workshop**.

Edinburgh has good sports facilities with the **Commonwealth Pool**, **Meadowbank Centre** and **Hillend** dry ski slope on the city outskirts plus a host of gymnasium centres and a burgeoning of martial arts clubs. On the spectator side, there's the rugby stadium at Murrayfield while the traditional New Year clash between city football rivals Hearts and Hibs is generally a sobering experience for at least half

the crowd.

The city is positively overrun with restaurants and pubs, and **The Athletic Arms** ('The Diggers') serves the best pint in the world. With the admirably relaxed and liberal licensing laws even if you are at a loose end it's possible to drown your sorrows at virtually any time of the day or night.

ALLAN B HUNTER

### Do you want to write for Station To Station?

We welcome contributions to this section of **LM**, and we'll pay our normal freelance rates for published articles. Your piece (typed and no longer than 500 words please), should mention the best clubs and pubs, forthcoming gigs, local fashion, local politics, etc, and what's going on in your area. Send your article to **Station To Station**, **LM**, 47 Gravel Hill, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1QS.



No Great Crime (1983): 'This was my first major work in Bristol,' says Delge, 'and it got me a lot of work. It's outside the Tropic Club — the manager gave me permission to paint there. The title is self-explanatory.'

The derelict walls of Bristol are a gallery for the works of graffiti artist 3 DEE. He took photographer BEEZER on a guided tour to look at some of his surviving pieces — but many have since been wiped out or painted over.

**D**ELGE is a graffiti artist. He's 21 years old and he lives and works in Bristol under the *nom-de-caveau* of 3 DEE. Delge reckons he was the first serious graffiti artist in the country; his first forays into the streets with cans of car paint were in 1983, soon after the closure of Bristol's famous Dugout club left the city with no real entertainment except for a flourishing hip-hop scene.

Although much of his work is commissioned, Delge carries on with the illegal 'sprays', and it's having to concentrate on work while risking a fine or even imprisonment which keeps the adrenalin flowing. His illegal works are, he says, more important than the commissions which subsidise them. 'I like the excitement, the buzz. With commissioned work there's no atmosphere.'

Delge has been arrested twice. The first time, in 1984, he was fined £125; the second time he was fined £40 and had a taste of the Government's 'short, sharp shock' policy. It was actually more of a long, dull pain in the neck, since he had to go to an attendance centre once every fortnight for 16 weeks — but it hasn't deterred him from committing more crimes, though he's more careful these

days to use lookouts. Next time he's caught, Delge reckons, he'll be put away.

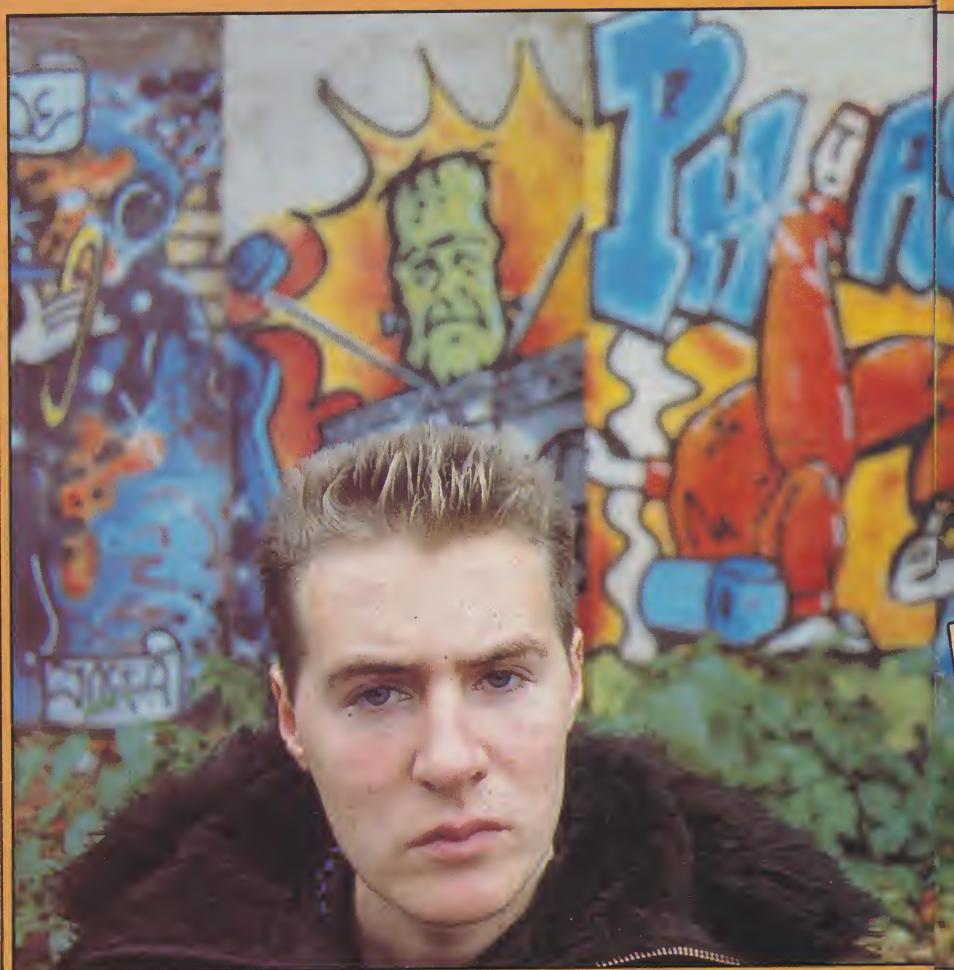
But he says it's not vandalism. 'I'd prefer to call it positive vandalism — graffiti art has had a bad press, and some kids don't help by just going round spraying their names on the walls, but all I'm doing is brightening the place up. There are worse things happening.'

Delge mostly uses car paint for his murals, but it's unreliable, and if he could afford it he'd use Buntlack, a German art paint which costs around £6 a can.

But his main problem at the moment isn't money. Delge says he's running out of walls. 'I only choose walls which are isolated. Painted surfaces are best — the spraypaint sinks into brick walls. Sometimes I've had to paint a wall before being able to spray a mural onto it.'

Delge is a founder-member of the Trans-Atlantic Federation (slogan: 'United In Crime'), which links together artists from Bristol (represented by Delge), the Bronx (represented by Brim and Bio) and Birmingham (represented by an artist called Goldie). An international exhibition of graffiti art featuring the TAF and American artists is planned for Birmingham in 1987.

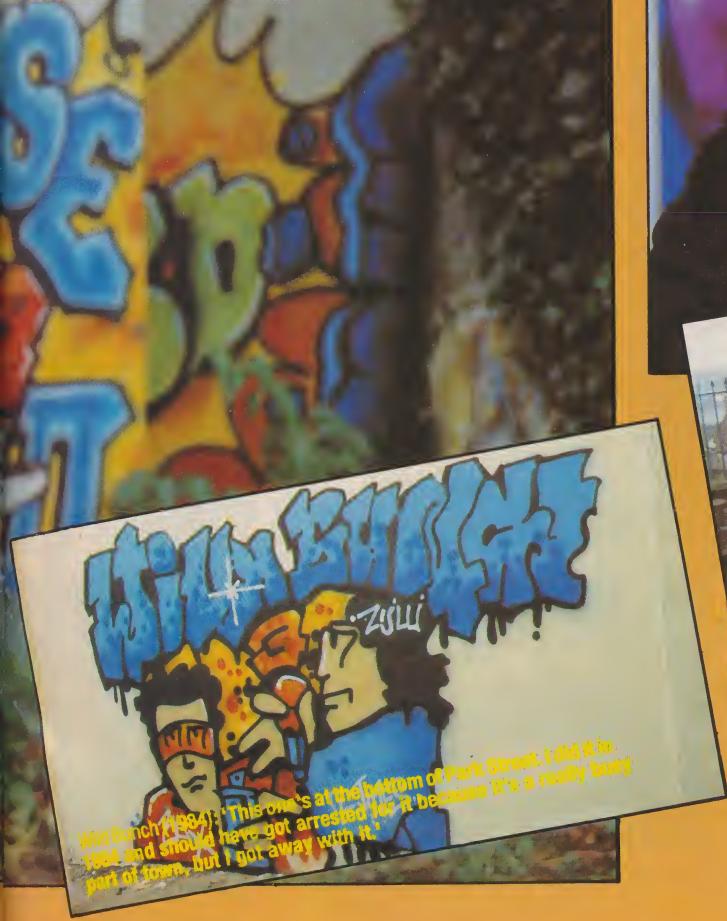
# LET US S





# SPRAY

Phase II (1984) is on St Michael's Hill, and was sprayed illegally in 1984.

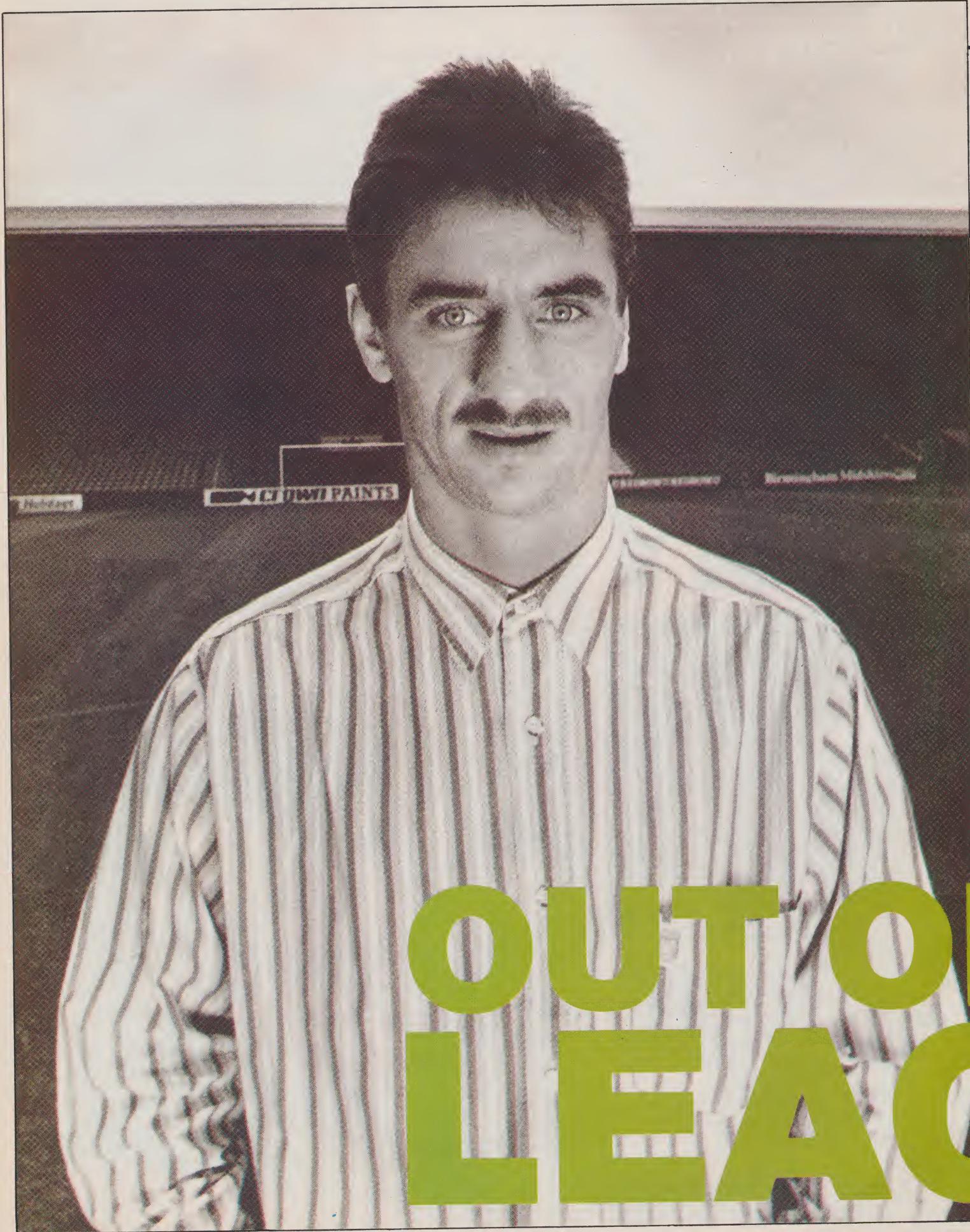


Wild Bunch (1984): 'This one's at the bottom of Park Street. I did it in 1984 and should have got arrested for it because it's a really busy part of town, but I got away with it.'



3D (1984): 'This is one of my favourite illegal ones,' says Delge. 'It still looks like it was painted yesterday. There's a tear coming out of one of the guys' eyes, which signifies that it could all end in tears.'

LM



**S**O this is what happens 'behind the scenes' at Anfield: Kenny Dalglish, still in his muddy kit, is hovering outside the dressing room, where his players are changing after the morning training session. Ronnie Whelan's talking into a radio reporter's microphone and trying not to laugh at Bruce Grobbelaar, who's pulling stupid faces behind the reporter's back. Outside in the reception area Steve Nicol's picking up a few boxes of nappies from one of the office girls ('yours are the ones in the orange boxes, the green ones are Kevin MacDonald's'), while Mark Lawrenson waits on patiently. Perhaps he's picking up his wages — it is Thursday, and that would explain the massive lorry in the car park.

Finally Ian Rush ambles along the corridor. He opens the door of the treatment room, feels for the switch and plunges the casualties into darkness before carrying on, chuckling at the shouts of those inside.

The most remarkable

thing about Ian Rush is how ordinary he is. With his shabby jeans, cheap shirt and bitten-down nails he cuts a distinctly unimpressive figure. Yet he is arguably the best footballer in Britain. His blistering pace, awesome finishing power and unerring knack for sniffing out the slimmest of goal opportunities have been vital factors in Liverpool's dominance of English and European football in recent years.

They have also earned him a three-and-a-half million pound move to Juventus and ensured that he'll be a wealthy man for the rest of his days.

It's as good a reason as any to join British football's elite-in-exile but not the only one, explains Ian as we walk down the tunnel, past the legendary 'This Is Anfield' sign and onto the 'hallowed turf'.

'The main reason I want to move to Italy is that I'll be playing with and against the best players in the world. Of course, money's a factor, but by no means the most important one. I've already proved I can play in the English league, we won the double last season and I've achieved everything I can here.'

'Now I want to prove myself against the best in the world. Playing for Wales I haven't been lucky enough to play in the World Cup or the European Championship, and I need that bigger challenge.'

The defection of Britain's best footballers, lured to the continent by the rich European giants, is a worrying problem for the British game. Of course the huge transfer fees soften the blow for the clubs' directors, and for the players a million smackers in three years is a pretty effective cure for homesickness. Inevitably it's the fans, deprived of the game's brightest attractions, who suffer the real loss. Rush agrees that it's a problem, and one that looks likely to escalate.

'Obviously it is bad for the game here that the best players are moving away but it's inevitable, especially now that English clubs are banned from Europe. I think that's the main reason — all the best players want to be playing in European competition and they should be. It is ridiculous, though.'

'Clubs like Liverpool and Man United shouldn't be selling off their best players — they should be buying them, because they are the

best clubs. When English teams were in Europe there was always one of them which got to the final or won the trophy. The likes of Barcelona and all them, they're not as good as the English sides, they shouldn't be able to just come in and take the best players away.'

'I suppose it's because they've got more money, but I think something else inside our clubs must be wrong, the way they do things.'

After posing for photo-

house I live in, the car I drive and all that, but I'm still exactly the same person. It is easy to get carried away by success but you've got to remember that there's no way you're going to be at the top forever, and if you start getting too big for your boots you're going to come unstuck.'

'And the people here, the people at work, they just treat you like a normal person no matter how great you might think you are — that helps you keep your feet on the ground.'

**It is bad for the game that the best players are moving away but it's inevitable, especially now that English clubs are banned from Europe.**

'Everything here is very simple and straightforward, there's no secret magic formula. Our style of play is based on good, simple passing. If there's a man free you play it to him, not try and beat five players and then lose the ball. And the training is basic too.'

'Everyone seems to think the training here must be very hard and complicated but it's the exact opposite. They say 'we brought you here because we know you've got the skill, we can't coach you, just go and do it yourselves'. In training we just do basic exercises and play five-a-side; we don't even practise free kicks or anything. I think that's the key to Liverpool's success really, that simplicity.'

**My lifestyle may have changed dramatically over the last few years, but I'm still exactly the same person.**

first game in the first team after about six months and it didn't take me long after that to get established.'

'Obviously coming to a place like Liverpool from Chester was very hard at first, but you've just got to forget about the fact that it's a huge crowd and a big club and just concentrate on getting in the team and playing well. And I think it'll be just as hard to adjust when I go to Italy. The thing about Liverpool is that it's such a down-to-earth club.'

'My lifestyle may have changed dramatically over the last few years in terms of money, the size of the

Outside in the car park, Ian Rush stops to sign autographs for the waiting gaggle of fans before speeding off in his sleek black Porsche. On the bus on the way home I come across this great passage in his autobiography (*Rush*, published in paperback by Grantham, £2.50) . . .

'Saturday night was the big night out. We'd have a few quid in our pockets, my mates and I, and we'd blow it on a good drink — and, as often as not, a good fight to end the night!'

Even millionaire sporting superstars are just like the rest of us really.'

## Mind the doors



Mark E Smith with Simon Rodgers (bass player and keyboardist).

# CRISP SMITH

**RICHARD LOWE — our man in London with a tape recorder and a portion of chips — tracks the rise of THE FALL and captures some of the latest nuggets in that ever-expanding volume of work, *The Thoughts Of Chairman Mark*. Photographs by BEEZER.**

**M**ARK E SMITH is a happy man. His group The Fall's last single, *Mr Pharmacist*, was their most successful ever. It got to 75 in the charts. Their eight year career had hardly been a staggering commercial success, but The Fall have managed to maintain a loyal and consistent audience for their peculiar brand of rock 'n' roll music.

'We usually manage to sell about 20-40,000 copies of each record,' he says. 'We do all right. We're not exactly in Rolls Royces yet, but we make a decent living.'

Indeed, The Fall's latest LP *Bend Sinister* entered the charts at a respectable 34 at the time of writing, and it's this august body of work that Mark is here to discuss, particularly some of the more curious song titles such as *Shoulder Pads*, *Terry Waite Sez* and *US Eighties And Nineties*.

'Shoulder Pads' is just about a lot of different people and why I think

they're twats — there's two parts to the song, one on each side of the LP, but really I could have written about nine different songs on that subject. I suppose it is an odd title; it's an American football term and I can't stand American football. It's so boring and complicated — like a sort of moronic chess.

'Terry Waite Sez' isn't about the Terry Waite, although I do dislike him intensely; we were in this pub in Stockport and there was this drunk there called Terry Waite and I noted down all the things he was saying and used them for the song.

'US Eighties And Nineties' is about America and how it's changed over the years. When I've been there before it was the freest place I'd ever been to in my life, but the last few times I've been it's been a very oppressed place — as bad as Russia or somewhere.

'Have you ever been behind the Iron Curtain? It shits you up. I've been to East Germany and Yugoslavia — horrible places. I suppose they have a better

standard of living than we do, but that standardisation of life is a danger. Everybody wears brown pants and everybody wears check shirts. That's why I don't agree with socialist views. I don't think turning Britain into East Germany is going to solve anything; it'll just make things worse.

'And those bands that go on about socialism, those Red Wedge people, they

**“ Have you ever been behind the Iron Curtain? It shits you up. Everybody wears brown pants and everybody wears check shirts. That's why I don't agree with socialist views. ”**

don't really know anything about politics — they don't know anything about history or 'owt and I think they do more harm than good. And the way I see it, it's dangerous because next year it could be the Nazi party and they wouldn't know any different.'

The Fall, however are not averse to playing the odd benefit. They recently played an anti-apartheid gig at the Albert Hall with The Smiths and even played at a benefit for Derek Hatton's legal battle fund.

'We insisted on being paid for that. We're not tramps, we're working class people doing a job, so why shouldn't we be paid for it? I'm not a socialist but I think it's wrong the way that guy was persecuted, especially by the Labour Party, and he's only going

to be replaced by some line-toeing middle-aged guy who's not going to do anything for the working class people of Liverpool.'

A staunch Mancunian and a man with such songs as *The North Will Rise Again* and *Lucifer Over Lancashire* in his repertoire, Smith nevertheless refutes the suggestion that he's one of that most irritating of breeds — the Professional Northerner.

'I'm always accused of that, but it's just not true, it's just something that's been tagged on me over the years. I don't dislike people who come from the south. It's terrible to say things

like that; all that northern thing is getting very tiresome.'

'I thought what Edwina Currie said about northerners was outrageous, though. I mean just look at all these Londoners; they're knackered, aren't they? The water's shit and they live in horrible overcrowded conditions. It's hilarious. And if you go to Newcastle they're all so revoltingly healthy it makes you sick, — they all go running and everything.'

'With 87 just round the corner, the media are getting starry-eyed and nostalgic about the 'heady days of punk rock'. Smith (a bit of a legendary punk veteran), has an interesting viewpoint.

'All this punk retrospective stuff is just a media hype — The Fall haven't been going for 10 years for a start, and nor have a lot of

the other bands that are getting lumped into all that stuff. Like we did this Tenth Summer thing in Manchester, which was meant to celebrate the tenth anniversary of punk and there were bands like us, New Order, The Smiths, OMD, The Virgin Prunes — none of those bands have been going ten years, it was all a bit soft. It was a nice day though.'

'People go on about it all now, but no-one cared about us or gave us a hand when we were starting out; The Buzzcocks helped us out a real lot in them days but they're the only ones who did. I must admit I'm more into all those groups now than I was then, especially Sham 69 — I saw them on the telly again and they were great, pure vaudeville, like a comedy act or something. But I'm not into all that glorifying of the past. I'm more interested in the present.'

The present for The Fall is a tour of Britain and America ('we're treated more like demagogues over there, it's like doing a lecture tour or something'), and then this month a new single, as yet untitled, which will coincide with, and be based on, a play, written and performed by The Fall themselves.

'The single will be the same title as the play, and it's all about Pope John Paul I, the one who died after about 30 days. I wrote the play and we'll all be acting in it. It's based on this book I read about him which reckoned there was a conspiracy to murder him involving all these Italian fascist guys and this bishop from Chicago. Apparently the night before he died he'd made this list of people he wanted to get rid of in the Vatican. It's all contention of course, no-one really knows if it's true or not. Things like that fascinate me.'

Doubt if it'll make number one in Italy though.



# FLYING



# G TONIGHT

**CURTIS HUTCHINSON** drops his spanner and feeler gauges to take a giant leap for LM on the moon set of **SUPERMAN IV**. During his lunar walk he meets up with special visual effects maestro **Harrison Ellenshaw**.

**C**HRISTOPHER REEVE points to a crater, scratches his head, and paces up and down. Something's not quite right. A set decorator is despatched with a wheelbarrow and brush to add some finishing touches to the offending dip.

Reeve confers with director Sidney J Furie about the scene they're preparing to shoot. Krypton's most famous son has just whizzed through outer space to aid a stricken Soviet spaceship, and now the man of steel is enjoying a self-congratulatory break on the moon before heading back Earthwards.

The scene is set for one of *Superman IV*'s most spectacular fight sequences, a lunar-based flying battle between our caped hero and his new nemesis, Nuclear Man.

Like Sean Connery, Christopher Reeve has learned to never say never again. Having said enough was enough after the third *Superman* film in 1983, Reeve has been flexing his wings a little, most notably on the London stage, though his film work has been disappointing. (His last movie, *The Navigator*, wasn't even released over here). So why the *volte-face*?

Apparently the temptation was too great after he was assured that he could have some creative control of the project. And perhaps the money was too good to refuse.

'I wanted to get the old enthusiasm back, and to do that I had to have some control,' explains Reeve. At his insistence, Superman now confronts real contemporary issues, even if it does mean the superhero breaking his mandate of non-interference.

'It's obvious,' Reeve says, 'many people are looking for a super *someone* who can really change things. While staying within the framework of a fantasy film we're trying to bring Superman a little closer to the real world.'

Instead of putting the man in the red trunks through identical paint-by-number scenarios, the series is generic, and this probably explains the great audience fascination with the *Superman* movies. Each instalment promises a further glimpse into the Superman psyche, which is great if you're interested in the character on a human level. Much more fun, though, is the guarantee of the latest in hi-tech SFX.

Unlike Rambo, James Bond and Indiana Jones, Superman can do the impossible and it's up to people like Harrison Ellenshaw, the Visual Special Effects Co-ordinator on this movie, to make the impossible look possible.

It's quite likely that this affable American was born to be an FX man. His father was the near-legendary Peter Ellenshaw, the man who handled the effects on *Black Narcissus*, won an Oscar for his pioneering work on *20,000 Leagues*

*Under The Sea* and is often cited as an early influence by Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

Harrison's pedigree is no less distinguished than his father's. After collaborating with Dad on Walt Disney's SF spectacular *The Black Hole*, Harrison quickly established himself as an FX whiz-kid on *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, *Tron* and, more recently, Michael Jackson's 3-D mini-epic, *Captain EO And The Space Knights*.

We spoke amid the hustle and bustle of a very busy moon set at Cannon's Elstree Studios. Harrison started by outlining his responsibilities behind the scenes on *Superman IV* and explaining the difference between visual effects and special effects.

'I'm supposed to be in charge of visual effects, which is a little different from special effects,' he says. 'Special effects usually refer to large-scale physical effects like explosions and, with this particular movie, putting a man on wires and flying him through the set.'

'On the other hand, visual effects generally refer to things that are handled in post-production. For example if we put Chris Reeve on wire you actually see the wire through the camera. Somebody in visual effects will get rid of it later. If we shoot a very long shot where we see this set,' he says, gesturing toward the lunar landscape before us, 'we also see things off the set. We then have to add a matte painting that looks like the rest of the moon. Anytime you combine two pieces of film then it's a visual effect.'

'The terms 'visual' and 'special' effects get mixed and matched around, but I try to keep them separate.'

This is all getting a bit technical, isn't it? What are



matte paintings?

'Matte shots refer to paintings that are sometimes done on glass. They're supposed to be so photographically real that you can match them with some live action and some full-size set or location and they appear to be the same thing,' explains Harrison. 'Theoretically you don't see the join.'

A good example of this comes in the climactic scene in *The Empire Strikes Back* where Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker are battling it out with lightsabres on a catwalk protruding over an apparently bottomless chamber. Beneath the duellists is, in fact, one of Harrison's intricate matte paintings.

Harrison also works on Superman's flying shots once they're in the can. For this movie he's using a new approach.

'On the first three *Superman* films they utilised front projection,' he says. 'They projected the plate behind him. With this film we've chosen to use blue screen for our optical composites. With a blue screen you put somebody in front of a blue piece of material and you're able, optically, to eliminate the blue in the scene and replace it with a background. This is a bit tricky with Superman because he's mostly dressed in blue. You have to be very careful that his legs and arms don't disappear. It can be done with retouching, which is called rotoscoping, when required.'

*Superman IV* might be breaking new ground (it's the first *Superman* from Cannon Films, and the first in the series not to be shot at Pinewood), but Harrison points out that the new producers have taken great pains to reassemble the original principal cast members.

Gene Hackman makes a welcome return as bumbling villain Lex Luthor, Margot Kidder is Lois Lane, Marc McClure is back as faithful photographer Jim Olsen and Jackie Cooper continues as the long-suffering editor of the *Daily Planet*. The film crew is mostly British.

'We're continuing the tradition of the first three which were shot here in Britain,' says Harrison. 'It would have been foolish to have made the fourth one somewhere else, that's something along the lines of 'Don't fix it if it's not broken'.'

'You're talking about a great number of technicians and all sorts of people who worked on the first three, and the excitement on the first day that Chris flew, it was so effortless. It's only then that you can

appreciate what tremendous work and research and development went into the first one. We have people like Bob Hartman whose speciality is flying rigs. He knows exactly where to put the crane and VOOOM!',

out goes Chris. To shoot this anywhere else using a different crew would be like re-inventing the wheel.'

Surprisingly, Harrison hasn't worked up any new optical tricks for this movie.

'We're really doing some conventional things, the difference is the choices you make,' he says. 'This is the first *Superman* movie I've worked on, whereas other people on the show have worked on all three, so my choices of how to do some shots may be different from previous choices. That's the difference.'

Harrison studied the other *Superman* movies before starting work on this project.

'I've seen them kinda subliminally many times over in bits and pieces,' he says. 'I have an eight-year-old son who is a big Superman fan and he's seen them many more times than I have. He knows all there is to know about them.'

Harrison comes to *Superman IV* fresh from the



was beginning to think that I wouldn't do anything else on a Lucas film, so it was a pleasant surprise.'

As a leading FX man, Harrison is often asked how to get into the movie special-effects business. He admits it's becoming more and more difficult.

'At one time — before *Star Wars* — it was quite easy to get into special effects. Nowadays there are

# Supermen, one and all

## SUPERMAN — THE MOVIE (1977)

Directed by Richard Donner

'You'll believe a man can fly', ran the blurb on the posters. And sure enough we did.

The drawn out opening outlines just about everything you ever wanted to know about the infant Kal-El, his dad Marlon Brando (horrendously over-paid), the dying planet Krypton, 3 banished criminals and the transformation of Clark Kent from hick Kansas boy into *Daily Planet* hack.

That's a lot of plot for half a movie. But somehow Donner keeps the narrative flowing while you patiently wait for Reeve to strip and get airborne.

Then it's non-stop action as Superman saves Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) from certain death after she falls from a helicopter, chases nuclear rockets and foils Lex Luthor's (Gene Hackman) plans to sink California into the Pacific.

Over-long, perhaps, but great fun all the same.

## SUPERMAN II (1980)

Directed by Richard Lester

A new director with a new approach. Even though this adventure was shot back-to-back with its predecessor, it's a very different movie.

With the heavy narrative out of the way, Richard Lester successfully injects a lot of humour so there's plenty of visual gags and some classic one-liners from Hackman's Lex Luthor.

Three renegades from the planet Krypton, led by the evil Zod (Terence Stamp), bring the American president to his knees while the Man Of Steel is in his glacial palace bedding Lois Lane.

Superman faces his biggest challenge and is caught with his trunks down.

## SUPERMAN III (1983)

Directed by Richard Lester

A mad millionaire (Robert Vaughn) recruits a computer boff (Richard Pryor) to help him achieve... WORLD DOMINATION; but first they must develop a machine to destroy Superman.

Unfortunately with the likes of Pryor and Pamela Stephenson in the cast *everything* is played for laughs.

Despite some excellent set pieces, including a schizoid Superman fighting himself, this one is generally regarded as being something of a disappointment.

## SUPERMAN IV (1987)

Directed by Sidney J. Furie

'The Earth is now my home too,' declares Superman. 'I must accept new responsibilities.'

This momentous decision to intervene in world events puts the caped crusader up against Lex Luthor's latest line in creative evil, the super human Nuclear Man (Mark Pillow).

Superman's running battle with his new adversary takes him around the world and into space.

As ever it is a woman who threatens to undo Superman's good work, this time in the shape of the pretty go-getting daughter (Mariel Hemingway) of the *Daily Planet*'s new proprietor.

**“** You can do most effects on 8mm and that's the way to get started. Become more experienced and then take that experience to a producer or film company that's doing some effects.

Michael Jackson 3D video *Captain Eo*, which is currently drawing huge crowds at Disneyland.

'It was a big project,' he says, recalling the elaborate opticals he employed in the 15-minute video spectacular. 'Very, very big. It was a nightmare. I was relatively pleased with it, though. We had 150 FX shots and that's a big number for a mini-film.'

The amount of effort put into the Jackson video makes it sound like it might have been a proper movie.

'Yeah,' Harrison nods. 'It was just like doing a full-length feature. Compared to *Captain Eo*, *Superman IV* is a little bit of a relief.'

Though *Captain Eo* was hard work, it did have its rewards. The mini-film won rave reviews when it was unveiled a couple of months ago; and, more importantly for Harrison, it meant working with George Lucas (the film's producer) for the first time since *The Empire Strikes Back*.

'I hadn't worked with George for six years and I

always more people wanting to do FX then there is work.'

'Nevertheless there's a great number of effects that can be done simply on 8mm film. There's no real definitive school to go to, there are publications where you can get bits and pieces of information and if you try doing your own effects you'll find that you can do most of them in a simpler way.'

'Often simple is better. You can do most effects on 8mm and that's the way to get started. Become more experienced and then take that experience to a producer or film company that's doing some effects. If you can just do one little thing, it's better than the basic 'I'll do anything to learn.'

'There's a lot of kids who are willing to do anything, but there aren't many who will say, 'I've done some work, would you like to see it?' Which means that you can have a look at a video of what they've done and perhaps decide to take the

# DAILY PLANET



**THERE** may be nothing particularly smart about a guy who wears his knickers outside of his trousers, but nevertheless Superman has been thrilling an audience of millions for almost fifty years.

Superman first appeared in the late Thirties, but he'd been in preparation for thousands of years; his ancestors were the Greek and Nordic heroes and gods of mythology. His creator Jerry Siegel, who wrote the strip (Joe Schuster drew it), acknowledged The Man Of Steel's pedigree when he described him as 'a character like Samson, Hercules and all the strong men I ever heard tell of rolled into one'.

Superman wasn't the first comic strip superhero — in 1936 Lee Falk's *The Phantom* had offered a foretaste of invincible derring-do — but Siegel and Schuster had spent five years struggling to get Superman into print before they finally persuaded Action Comics to give him a go in June 1938.

At the time, comics were generally presented as collections of different strips, or only appeared in newspapers, never as books devoted to a single character. But at Action Comics, scepticism about turned overnight into delight — the world was waiting to be saved. Editions doubled and trebled in sales, and in 1939 Superman made it as a newspaper strip as well.

Superheroes were popular among the soldiers and fliers of World War Two and they proliferated, adorning fighter planes and bombers. Their popularity was such that comic book sales soared as high as 15 million each month. It was easy to see the superheroes as the Allied forces, and the growing league of super-villains as the Nazi rotters.

And of the superheroes, none was as super-powerful as Superman, and none was quite as financially successful on the newsstands. With the war over, interest in super-wish-fulfilment waned, yet Superman continued saving the world almost unabated.

From the moment of his creation, Superman rapidly

'I hope so. Can't promise too much, otherwise the level of expectations will be too big . . .'

person on.'

When I spoke to Harrison, *Superman IV* had only been in production for a matter of weeks. Harrison had been involved in the film from day one, a luxury not always afforded him.

'What I like to avoid is coming in at the end of a movie and have somebody come up to me and hand me some boxes of film and tell me to go away and add some effects. You can find that it hasn't been shot particularly well, and then you find yourself struggling to make your stuff work.'

'Here, with this movie — which I would classify as a large effects film — I want to be there to make sure that they don't move the camera in some shots. It means I can shoot in Vistavision instead of a normal 35mm, which helps me enormously. That way I have all the material in the best possible shape to work on. If you know the intent of the shot then you know what to do with the effect.'

Harrison's post-production cutting, splicing and painting will take him well into the New Year while the producers decide whether to go for a summer or Christmas release.

So what's the show stopper?

Harrison smiles, but remains fairly tight-lipped. 'Well,' he says, pausing to choose his words carefully, 'Superman has a fight with Nuclear Man that goes around the world. They go to a lot of places and it should be relatively spectacular.'

*Relatively spectacular?* Surely we can look forward to some incredible fighting scenes?

'I hope so. Can't promise too much, otherwise the level of expectations will be too big . . .'

A mischievous glint twinkles in his eye. 'You'll just have to wait.'

## The never-ending story

**Since his first miraculous appearance, Superman has never deserted us in our times of need. ROGER KEAN, faster than a speeding telephone box, examines the man and the myth.**

grew more super: the early strips were relatively down-to-earth, but as time went by he seemingly developed super-hot/cold breath and X-ray vision, to name but a giga-joule or two of his powers.

Similarly, the earlier stories deal with events almost domestic in comparison with tales of the Fifties and onwards. But super-good heroes require super-baddies, otherwise Newton's laws of opposite and equal reactions get badly upset, and later stories begin to deal almost exclusively with the wicked designs of Lex Luthor, Brainiac and their kind.

The baddies are vital in another respect: like any hero, Superman has his Achilles' heel. Kryptonite is a rock-material formed by the explosion of Superman's home planet Krypton, and, as everyone knows, green kryptonite is the only substance that can kill Superman by negating his super-powers. It takes a super-villain, however, to use this knowledge effectively.

Red kryptonite was invented in the Fifties, and while it doesn't kill Superman, it can alter his abilities and personality to an extraordinary degree — it can, as in the film *Superman III*, stop him from being a goodie. Not nice.

And 'niceness' is a trait Superman shares with all other superheroes. 'Nice-ness' in the Fifties moral sense. Superman doesn't 'do it'. It's an area where the films haven't followed the comics; on celluloid The Man Of Steel actually gets to bed with Lois Lane, but on the page super-sex is not one of his super-skills and

there seems little in the way of super-man-power to show underneath those super-tight tights. The potential for super-powerful, super-extended orgasms is denied.

Reacting to public belief that comics were corrupting the youth of the nation, the major American publishers banded together and formed the Comics Code Authority in the early Fifties. And in 1954 a psychiatrist, Dr Frederick Wertham, published *Seduction of the Innocent*, claiming that reading comics was leading to an increase in juvenile delinquency.

He accused Batman and Robin of being homosexual lovers, Wonder Woman of lesbianism and Superman of replacing traditional religious belief with his miraculous powers. There were illustrations in Wertham's book of a supposedly horrific nature, taken from comics, in support of the theory that depicted violence breeds real violence. (What would he think today about video nasties?)

Really, though, apart from the underlying feeling that two macho and extremely butch male heroes living in each other's pockets (so to speak) were part of a homosexual wish dream, Wertham had little to worry about on the sex angle.

Not so Superman, whose drab private life mostly consisted of avoiding the amorous clutches of Lois Lane, or enjoying marital bliss in imaginary stories within the main story. The films at least have given him a bit more to do with those off-hours.

And what of Superman's

alter ego, the bespectacled newspaper reporter Clark Kent? It's been observed that Superman is very different in this respect from most of his super-peers; they are private people who put on a secret identity, whereas Superman puts on Clark Kent to disguise himself. Here, Siegel and Schuster really scored, creating a hero for the dreamer in everyone, suggesting that our drab, everyday lives are the fantasy. No wonder Superman has been a Super-Success.

And now, in America Superman is at the forefront of another comic book renaissance. After the Forties/early Fifties boom, there was a second in the mid-Sixties. The older heroes were dusted off and some (not Superman) were given sexier lives — an interest awakened by the proliferation of the so-called 'underground' comics that revelled in politics, satire and the new permissiveness (Fritz The Cat comes from this era). It seemed to coincide with the Vietnam war, and when that ended in fiasco, so did the comics boom.

Superman struggled on gamely through the Seventies, though, pushed into a new prominence by the *Superman* films, and he's re-emerged again as a popular hero, leader of the renewed wave of comic-book success that is now sweeping America.

The statistics are impressive. Some 250 different titles will be sold this year at an estimated circulation of 150 million. Comics are back to the level of popularity they enjoyed in the Fifties. This time round, though, Superman has undergone a transformation. The Man Of Steel has been Pumping Iron and now boasts a Rambo-esque body and a 'preppy' tough-sultry-guy-model face. Clark Kent's life has been brightened up too. Like any good ol' media Yuppie, Clark attends flashy Metropolis parties, writes a novel or two and externalises — can we talk about this? — with Lois Lane.

The hero has been updated for the Eighties and the super-myth continues . . .



# Dress to kill and hold your nose

Ardent clubber and deejay SIMON GOFFE presents a quick guide to London's crucial night spots

IN London you can find every possible nightclub that the twisted mind can imagine: The Wild Zone, Big TV, Theatre Of The Third Dimension, The Purple Pit, Locomotion, Pigeon Toed Orange Peel... suggestive names indeed, but what lies behind them?

Let's start south of the Thames. The Flim-Flam is an oasis in the South London nightlife desert. Presenting a complete mixture of dance music, it's fairly cheap to get in and there's reduced admission for the unemployed. Hosted by Rob Day and Jonathan More, African and latin jazz collides with heavy funk,

hip-hop and go-go in a sweltering mixture that fits easily into the surroundings of a large seedy dancehall, reminiscent of a Wild West saloon, complete with ancient cartoons showing on the walls.

Moving north to the West End, Soul Station at Whispers in Charing Cross Road defies its name by playing hardcore jazz. Small and sweaty, this trendy club is reasonably priced and bubbling.

Down the road you can't mistake the glitter and the crowds outside the Hippodrome. Full of suburban star spotters, it will set you back between £6 and £10 to

get in, and nearly as much to get a drink. You'll gasp at the whirling lightshow and feel embarrassed about having one spot too many, or at having bought your clothes at Coles or Chelsea Girl rather than a Covent Garden designer boutique. That, though, is one of the irresistible drawbacks of London nightlife.

The same problems appear at the West End's two other major snobholes. Stringfellow's houses the ultimate in-crowd, while the latest addition to the Hooray Henry's diary is the converted church in Shaftesbury Avenue called The Limelight. Both will leave

you standing on the pavement for hours while they debate whether or not you're the right sort.

My advice to those seeking a comfortable up-market club to entertain that special friend is to try the more intimate surroundings of Lacey's in St Martin's Lane (opposite Stringfellow's), or the equally plush but relaxed Gullivers in Mayfair, the capital's most up-market soul venue.

Moving north of central London, The Town And Country Club in Kentish Town features some of the best live bands on the circuit. On Fridays (after the bands have finished), the cavernous former cinema also plays host to the Locomotion, a friendly club fronted by Capital Radio deejay and ex-Boothill Foot-Tapper Wendy May. Wendy spins her own mix of dance music from the last 30 years, heavy on the Motown era.

Moving back to South London and on to Saturday, you'll find the the hippest club outside the West End is The Dance Exchange at The Fridge in Brixton. Leading record spinner, music writer and record company boss Jay Strongman lays down a heavy-weight beat bringing together Washington DC go-go, New York hip-hop, Chicago house music, old R & B and more traditional soul and funk in a cold but packed venue. While Brixton is not normally associated with trendiness, the multiracial mix that characterises today's club scene is no better expressed than here. Wear your Levi 501s.

Saturday has its sleazeholes, too. With the recent closure of the Peoples Club, it's hard to find a place to spend all-night dancing apart from the endless private or fee-paying parties that are the speciality of all inner cities. The latest most London clubs close is 3am. Paul Murphy and Steve Holloway ooze sleazy jazz up to this hour at 325 Euston Road, although Gossips in Dean Street manages an extra half hour.

Another basement club, Gossips has an unbeatable atmosphere that larger clubs just can't manage. On Saturday David Rodigan spins the best reggae selection in the country, while on Monday, Alice In Wonderland supplies the spiritual home for Char toppers Dr & The Medics and their psychedelic followers.

Thursday features Gaz's Rockin' Blues, run by Gaz Mayall with his inimitable style of R & B, ska, rocksteady and anything else that takes his fancy, plus a parade of the nation's more interesting bands. On Fridays I take Gossips' reputation on myself at Fools Paradise, the major upfront soul night in the West End.

With the honourable exception of Gossips, week night raving is a bit of a hit and miss affair. The solid soul night out at Maximus on a Wednesday is usually bubbling as is the Wag Club around the corner in Wardour Street. Reckoned by many to be the trendiest of the lot, The Wag is dark and vaguely depressing with a multitude of murals covering the walls of its two floors. Initially famous in the Swinging Sixties as the Whiskey-A-Go-Go, it's an essential stop for any hipster visiting London.

Other clubs worth considering are Heaven (the gay man's mecca under the arches at Charing Cross), and the suburban soul clubs like Oasis, Dougies and La Plaza which are geared for dedicated dancers.

When clubbing it, always take plenty of money with you, dress to kill but wear comfortable shoes, always be polite to the most aggressive bouncers, beware dress restrictions, never ever buy any drugs in a club and don't breathe through your nose when you go to the toilet.

Oh and hey... be careful out there!

The famous light show at the Hippodrome.



**Flim-Flam, Harp Club, 327 New Cross Road, SE14 (01-692 4077), The Fridge, Town Hall Parade, Brixton Hill, SW2 (01-326 5100), Gossips, 69 Dean Street, W1 (01-734 0201), Gullivers, 11 Down Street, W1 (01-499 0760), Hippodrome, Leicester Square, WC2 (01-437 4311), Lacey's, 81 St. Martin's Lane, WC2 (01-240 8187). The Limelight, 136 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC1 (01-434 0572), Locomotion, Town & Country Club, 9-17 Highgate Road, NW5 (01-267 3334), Maximus, 14 Leicester Square, WC2 (01-734 4111), 325 Club, 325 Euston Road, NW1. The Wag Club, 35 Wardour Street, W1 (01-437 5534), Whispers, 146 Charing Cross Road, WC2.**



# THE BOY KEEPS SWINGING

It's an old story: booze, drugs and intense personal anguish take their toll of a talented young rock star and eventually he goes the way of Morrison, Hendrix, Joplin et al. But DAVID BOWIE has defied convention by staying alive (he's 40 in January), continuing to produce great records, diversifying into a wide range of acting roles and emerging from the whole experience with his faculties and his irrepressible energy and enthusiasm intact.

As his latest film, *Labyrinth*, opens in Britain, Bowie shares a carrot juice with ANNA CRYSTAL and discusses his recent film roles. Pictures by DAVIES AND STARR.

**D**avid Bowie may have been one of the most influential rock musicians to emerge in the Seventies, but despite numerous interviews little is known about the man who spent the best part of that decade hidden behind a bedazzling and bewildering assortment of masks.

After meeting him at the Colony Club House in downtown Malibu, I'm none the wiser, though Bowie was able to shed some useful light on his recent film career. He also shed some light — and a few pounds — on his current diet.

'I'm a health-food nut at the moment,' he says, ordering a light salad of ham and cheese. 'I'm a mood eater. If I wake up in the middle of the night to work on some music I'll have some real African coffee to jump-start my system. I've been known to go on for nights that way. I don't take anything stronger than that these days.'

Bowie's appearance — unlike his coffee — has certainly mellowed. He now favours tailor-made suits and expensive shirts and ties, his hair is short and blond, his mis-matched eyes are no longer highlighted with mascara and his ghost-like

pallor has been traded in for an all-year-round tan.

'I knew I had to get my crap together,' he says simply. 'In this business, to survive is success, and to survive you must stay on top of your mental and physical health. I believe they're integral parts of each other. Separate, yet one.'

He picks up a fork and tucks straight into *Julien Temple's Absolute Beginners*.

'It was a real disappointment,' he says, recalling his role as Vendice Partners. 'I'd been led to believe that it was going to be a new approach to film-making, visually exploring the limitations of film, like the sets that were oversized and houses with no front. Well, it sounded great — but I was disappointed.'

Wasn't he happy with his contribution, then?

'I liked the title song and the *That's Motivation* number. I was disappointed that some of my best dialogue, in fact some of my best work, was cut out. Scenes with Lionel Blair where they're arguing about music and finally my character thumps him one — it's all on the cutting room floor.'

'I don't feel at all bitter. I can be self-critical when necessary. You'll be seeing me choose my projects a lot more carefully next time. The main problem is you can never tell how the final film will look.'

Bowie flicks a glowing ember off the tip of his cigarette, and turns to *Labyrinth*, Jim Henson's epic creature-feature which has just opened in Britain. So far the film has received mixed reaction — it was hardly a box-office smash in the States, but it's gone down a storm in Japan.

Bowie — who plays Jareth, the Goblin king — was attracted to the role as soon as he read the script (written by Terry Jones of *Monty Python* fame), and he relished the chance to work with his friend Jim Henson. 'It was a learning experience,' he says.

Surprisingly, it seems that one of Bowie's favourites among his own film performances is his cameo as a knife-wielding assassin in John Landis's comedy thriller *Into The Night*.

'I played a street freak,' he chuckles. 'I hang around and make people nervous. That was the whole idea of the film, to have this couple (Michelle Pfeiffer and Jeff Goldblum) on the run and they keep bumping into famous people. It's one of the few films I'm in that I enjoy watching. Acting is very painful, it exposes your vulnerability.'

How did he think his film career was progressing?

'I always wanted to shock people with my versatility,' he says, stubbing out his cigarette, and immediately reaching for another. 'In *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* I was a straight guy just trying to get by. I lost a lot of groovy friends by playing that role. Hollywood is such a fickle place.'

'I loved the mood of *The Hunger*. It lulled you into a false sense of security —

then it zapped you,' he adds, snapping his fingers to emphasise the point.

So what sort of films does he like?

'I like a good performance. I take my son to all the Spielberg films, he's the storyteller of the century. In LA I go to Filmex, I'm always interested in what's going on in other countries. Germany, for instance... great acting, but no film industry. As for performers, Elizabeth Taylor has always been my favourite for as long as I can remember.'

Bowie fiddles with a ring on his right-hand index finger, lights up and slowly exhales a long shaft of smoke. He still looks very much a child, despite the ordeals of the last two decades.

Of course there were family problems, but ultimately there was Ziggy Stardust, the self-destructive alien rock star who mutated into the dangerously disturbed Aladdin Sane, only to resurface a couple of albums later as the jackbooted Thin White Duke.

In his attempt to challenge the expectations of his audience, Bowie single-handedly introduced theatre into rock. The price was high: in 1975 he had come close to ODing three times in one week and was so exhausted that he had to be helped from the stage at the end of a performance. His weight had plummeted to eight-and-a-half stone, and by the Eighties Bowie looked set to become another rock'n'roll suicide, a man terrified to be himself.

He says he went through a 'complete, catastrophic emotional breakdown' at the tail-end of this period, but against all odds he survived. He gave up drugs and moved from LA to Europe, where he settled for a while in West Berlin. Here he wrote and recorded the depressingly gloomy, yet excellent, *Low* album.

Tiring of life in that divided city, Bowie moved to the peace, tranquillity and sanity of Switzerland, establishing a rapport with his son Zowie and taking up health food and skiing.

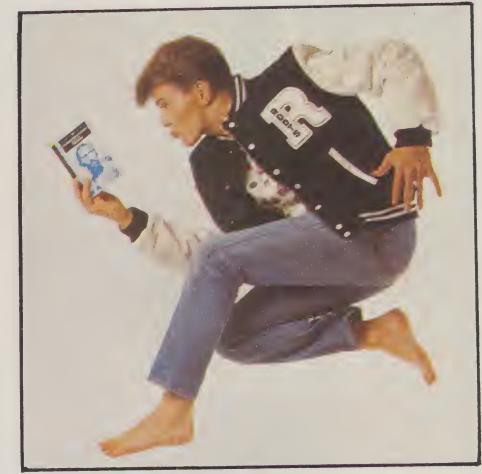
He moved into acting on stage, taking on the demanding role of John Merrick in the Broadway production of *The Elephant Man* for six months. He did so with distinction; one critic described the 'restrained tortured eloquence' with which Bowie portrayed the hideously deformed Merrick.

He also undertook *The Serious Moonlight Tour* which, though musically unadventurous, proved to be commercially his most successful yet.

Nowadays Bowie prefers to spend much of his time in Britain.

'London is my base,' he says, reaching for a glass of carrot juice. 'I need the energy there, you know? There's always this feeling of anti-desperation there. Sometimes I disguise myself and wander around London trying to get my roots back. The early days were such a natural high for me.'

Despite his current contentment with



**Young performers ask me how to get started, I always tell them to go to LA and work every club, bar and whorehouse to get themselves noticed.**

the capital Bowie admits that it's a difficult place for musicians to get a break. 'It's very hard to get a gig together there. In the early days I met a wall of negativity. Young performers ask me how to get started, I always tell them to go to LA and work every club, bar and whorehouse to get themselves noticed.'

So what of the future?

'I'm working on a video for my next album. I think it will surprise a lot of people. It sounds very Fifties... There are several film scripts which I'm reading, but as I said I'm very cautious at the moment.'

Bowie parks his knife and fork carefully on the edge of his plate.

'My son is the centre of my universe,' he concludes, getting up to leave the table. 'In fact he's responsible for my getting my act together. I wanted to be there for him.'

# THE GOBLIN WHO FELL TO EARTH

DAVID CURRIE reviews Bowie's misadventure in Wonderland

DAVID BOWIE used to reject film roles which called upon him to animate guitar strumming aliens. His curious casting as Jareth, a wicked song-and-dance goblin king in *Labyrinth* must therefore be considered something of an unfortunate final sigh of acceptance.

*Labyrinth* is the brain-child of *Muppet* mastermind Jim Henson and like his previous big screen creature-feature, *The Dark Crystal*, it is high on special effects, low on plot and decidedly middle ground on humour.

In essence the film concerns a young girl Sarah (played unconvincingly by newcomer Jennifer Connelly) poised on the threshold of womanhood though still clutching on to teddy bears and story books. Jealous of her parents' affections for her baby brother, she calls upon a gaggle of goblins to spirit him away. What then follows is a race against a 13-hour clock as Sarah, taunted and hindered by Jareth, confronts the challenge of a huge, winding labyrinth populated by Henson's biomechanical creations with the ultimate aim to reach Jareth's castle and rescue her kidnapped brother.

As one would expect the effects and wizardry of this make-believe world are flawless and, at times, inspired but the film quickly loses its sense of wonderment and instead of sympathising with Sarah's plight you begin to wish her brother would turn into a hungry goblin and repay her indiscretions with interest.

Amid this computer game scenario lurk five uninspiring new Bowie compositions which best reveal the age of the audience this film is tailored for — ie very, very young. *Labyrinth* is full of good intentions; namely Henson's desire to produce

something beyond the limitations of *The Muppets* in the form of an homage to traditional childrens' tales, an all-round mystical family entertainment — a *Wizard Of Oz* for the Eighties if you like. Less laudable though is Bowie's bizarre bid to become an all-round family entertainer. I find it difficult to imagine what benefits David Bowie considers to be gained from accepting such a throwaway role.

*Labyrinth*'s main failing lies with Henson's inability to inject any pacing. The race is on, the stakes are high, but judging by the way the story progresses it means little more to all involved than a brisk walk through an admittedly weird theme park. Yes the sets and costumes all sparkle with a hefty smattering of some of the 50 kilos of glitter used during production, but none of it is convincing apart from the climactic showdown between Sarah and Jareth in a hall where every law of gravity and architecture are flung to the wind.

All these ingredients, coupled with the expertise of people like *Monty Python*'s Terry Jones as scriptwriter and George Lucas as Executive Producer should, in theory, make for a classic movie of epic proportion. For all its glitter, goblins and rock legend, *Labyrinth* is ultimately an extravagant disappointment.

David Currie



# CRACKED ACTOR

The vast bulk of David Bowie's thespian activities has gone unseen by his British followers. But this doesn't reflect a lack of interest in *The Thin White One*'s aspirations to screen stardom; it's simply that Britain's film distributors move in mysterious ways. And now that most Bowie movies are available on video, CURTIS HUTCHINSON can hit the pause button and look in on a celluloid career . . .

UNLIKE just about every other pop star who's ventured into acting, Bowie has rarely played safe, and his choice of projects has been eclectic. While this is all very laudable his film performances have, by and large, confused and disappointed more often than impressed or entertained.

But Bowie's theatre and TV work has been more encouraging; his best notices have come for his extraordinary portrayal of John Merrick, the deformed 'elephant man' of Victorian England, in the American stage production of Bernard Pomerance's play *The Elephant Man*. Where John Hurt needed complex prosthetics to play Merrick in the film, Bowie gave an equally compassionate portrayal in nothing more than a skimpy loincloth.

Next came his equally impressive title role as the amoral, womanising murderer in the BBC TV adaptation of Bertholt Brecht's *Baal*; it's regarded as a difficult part for any actor to tackle, but Bowie seemed to take it in his stride.

These performances, along with his masterly lead in *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*, gave rise to some great expectations for Bowie's acting career. But, sadly, they have yet to be fulfilled. His subsequent choice of roles has become more and more off-beat; now he's content with pointless extended cameos.

And more disturbing is Bowie's latest venture into the song-and-dance world of family entertainment. David Bowie the all-round entertainer may have arrived . . . but whatever happened to David Bowie the actor?

room floor that I'll give a Bowie-related prize to the first person who can produce positive identification of the elusive scene.

To all intents and purposes *The Man Who Fell To Earth* was Bowie's feature-film debut. Judging by Bowie's subsequent remarks on his physical and mental state during production, his zombie-like performance as the spaced-out, marooned alien required little or no acting.

But even so the casting was ideal. A surprisingly uncharismatic, blank-faced Bowie drifts through the proceedings, flashes his artificial willy (the newt-like beings from his stricken planet appear to be neutered), gets laid, gets drunk and watches TV — all the healthy pursuits of an Earthbound slob.

## The Image (1969)

Directed by Michael Armstrong  
*NME*

A genuine Bowie oddity. This 14-minute X-certified short features a 20-year-old Bowie as the doomed subject of a crazed painter. Shot in black and white, the film consists largely of Bowie standing silently at a rain-splattered window.

Sounds dull, eh? Well, it is.

*The Image* was made in 1967 for the arthouse circuit and appeared briefly in 1969, the year of Bowie's first hit single, *Space Oddity*. The film re-emerged over ten years later on a video sold through *NME*; even so, it's still something of a collector's item. File under dispensable Sixties paranoia.

## Love You Till Tuesday (1969)

Directed by Malcolm J Thompson  
*Channel 5*

Shot on a shoestring as a TV showcase but never screened. Bowie runs through a selection of his songs, including an off-key *Space Oddity*, and performs a twee mime. Fascinating stuff.

## The Man Who Fell To Earth (1976)

Directed by Nicolas Roeg  
*Screen Entertainment*

Okay, okay, I know Bowie also had a walk-on part in *The Virgin Soldiers* (1968), but I've freeze-framed the film dozens of times and haven't spotted him. In fact, I'm so convinced he ended up on the cutting-

## Just A Gigolo (1978)

Directed by David Hemmings  
*Channel 5*

Undoubtedly the low point of Bowie's flirtation with film. His minimalist approach to acting may have seen him through *The Man Who Fell To Earth* — he was after all playing an alien — but in *Just A Gigolo* his identical interpretation of the young Prussian officer returning from the battlefields of the First World War is excruciatingly awful and positively painful to watch.

It appears that Bowie did the film as a favour for actor-turned-director David Hemmings, but he shouldn't have bothered — a thought echoed by the man himself, who later disowned the sorry affair as his 'thirty-two Elvis Presley movies rolled into one'.

## Christiane F (1978)

Directed by Ulrich Edel  
*Channel 5*

Live footage of Bowie performing tracks from the *Heroes* album was edited into this moving story about a teenage drug addict, set against the stark background of West Berlin.

## The Hunger (1983)

Directed by Tony Scott  
MGM/UA

A slight change of tack here. After his blunder in *Just A Gigolo*, Bowie wisely bounced back with a supporting role, playing Catherine Deneuve's doomed lover in this chic tale of modern day vampires.

Bowie's role here is short and sweet, but it is to his credit that the movie loses its momentum once he has been killed off.

Incidentally, this was Tony Scott's (Ridley's brother) first feature film after a distinguished career in TV commercials—hence the film's over-glossy look and the repeated image of billowing curtains. The movie flopped but Scott was to have more success with his second feature, *Top Gun*.

## Merry Christmas

### Mr Lawrence (1983)

Directed by Nagisa Oshima  
Channel 5

In Major Jack Celliers Bowie found the ideal character, with the right script and director. Everything gels and, what's more, Bowie emerges head and shoulders above a very strong cast which includes the likes of Tom Conti, Jack Thompson and Ryuchi Sakamoto.

Bowie plays a New Zealander who, wracked by guilt over a childhood indiscretion committed against his brother, joins the army at the outbreak of the Second World War in the vain hope that he might be killed in action. An honourable death on the battlefield is deprived him when he's taken prisoner by the Japanese; the rest of the film deals with the way in which he finally achieves his redemption.

Undeniably Bowie's finest celluloid moments.



## Yellowbeard (1983)

Directed by Mel Damski  
Rank

The story goes that Bowie was sunning himself on an exotic beach when he was befriended by an assortment of Monty Python renegades. Bowie was talked into making a cameo in their celebrity-laden pirate caper.

For the record, then, Bowie—with a shark's fin inexplicably attached to his back—appears as a rating in just one scene, utters his line and, like the film, disappears without a laugh.

## Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars (1984)

Directed by  
D A Pennebaker  
Screen Entertainment

Excellent concert film documenting Bowie's final appearance as Ziggy Stardust at the packed Hammersmith Odeon in 1974.



## Jazzin' For Blue Jean (1984)

Directed by Julien Temple  
Picture Music International

A lively extended promo for the Blue Jean single which had a theatrical outing supporting *Company of Wolves*. Bowie has two roles, one as a nerd who chats up a girl in a pub, promising to introduce her to a rock star... and the other as the drugged-out singer. Nice tongue-in-cheek send-up.

## Into the Night (1985)

Directed by John Landis  
CIC

Hit-and-miss comedy thriller about a young couple on the run. As with all John Landis films (he's the man behind *The Blues Brothers*

and *Spies Like Us*), the main area of interest is spotting the bit players, including unknown film directors and the odd well-known rock star. Bowie is featured in a couple of scenes as a cut-throat killer who's after Michelle Pfeiffer—who isn't?

## Absolute Beginners (1986)

Directed by Julien Temple  
Palace

Again Bowie opts for a supporting role, this time as a smooth-talking mid-Atlantic businessman who makes his money by selling trends. Bowie's showpiece, though by no means the best sequence in the film, is the *That's Motivation* number which has him singing and dancing on a giant typewriter. Great stuff.

## Whistle Down The Wind

NOTHING is confirmed yet, but there are strong indications that David Bowie is planning a world tour for 87.

Rumours of the tour have been rife for months, and though the official word is still 'no comment' it seems only a matter of time before the tour is announced.

A world tour would give Bowie his first proper dates since the *Serious Moonlight* shows of '83. Since those gigs (which included two performances at the Milton Keynes Bowl), Bowie has made guest appearances at Live Aid and in a Tina Turner show at the Birmingham NEC.

A new Bowie tour would probably coincide with a new Bowie LP, but again the details are hazy.

In the meantime, the *When The Wind Blows* film soundtrack LP is due in the shops before Christmas. The LP—which includes Bowie's recent single as its title track—also features songs from Roger Waters, Paul Hardcastle, Hugh Cornwall, Squeeze and Genesis. The film, based on Raymond Briggs's best-selling cartoon book about post-Bomb life and death, will be released in the UK in January.

PAUL STRANGE

# FANTASTIC VOYAGE

With a game like this, who needs films (or music, or carrot juice)? ROGER KEAN and joystick take on Jareth in the computer version of LABYRINTH, an animated game of hide-and-seek.



'We know all there is to know about you!'  
A PIXEL-ATED Bowie as Jareth.

BEING a rock star simply isn't enough these days. Being a luminary of stage or screen is positively passé. In fact, Being There isn't sufficient at all any more, unless you're also the star of a computer game.

Grand is the Hall Of Game Fame: a glittering array of twinkling names pixelated, raster-fied and generally ROMmed up to super-stardom on the small, animated computer screen. We've had James Bond, we've had Superman, we've had Dusty Bin and we're about to get Brian Clough. David Bowie can heave a sigh of relief, sit back and relax—he's in with the big ones, for now he's a computer game too.

At least, Bowie's a computer star, in the persona of Jareth the Goblin king, linchpin of Lucasfilm's fifth and latest game.

Lost and alone in the labyrinthine corridors, you risk becoming a slave forever if you fail to find Jareth within 13 hours.



# ABSOLUTELY AT THE BEGINNING . . . THE VERY FIRST LM VIDEO COMPETITION !

LM

course, Jareth.

*Labyrinth* begins with a simple text adventure (but nearly everything is joystick/icon-driven), which has you wandering around, returning home and seeing an advert on the television for a new cinema blockbuster called — *Labyrinth*. Self-publicity is all.

Off you go, in search of the cinema. Realism dictates that before the film starts you should buy some popcorn and be forced to chat with the obnoxious person next to you. And then the film begins . . . and so does the adventure proper.

David Bowie, as Jareth, appears and speaks: 'YOU! in the front row. We've been watching you for some time now. We know all there is to know about you . . .'

Jareth explains your quest: you must enter the labyrinth, make your way to Jareth's castle, and there confront him. The journey throws the player into some superbly designed locations, where Hoggle is encountered. Without his help you may never find your way through the labyrinthine corridors, some lined with playable piano keys, others with stone faces set into them, telling you 'turn back'.

Two characters, Alph and Ralph, pose logic problems in the form of truth games based on alternate choices, while the Wise Old Man offers a cryptic clue to help you find which of nine portals is the real exit.

As light relief from all this mind-boggling adventuring, there are some arcade sequences. In one you have to rescue Ludo, who hangs upside-down from a tree set in a small maze. Two goblins patrol this maze, and force you to dispose of them first; yellow trapdoors which change colour when you run over them must be turned red, and the goblins will fall through.

Jareth has only allowed 13 hours for you to unlock the secrets of the Labyrinth and seek him out — and failure to do so within the time limit results in perpetual slavery for the player.

*Labyrinth — The Computer Game* is available on disk at £14.95 for the Commodore 64 and 128. Sadly, the complexity of the game makes it seem unlikely that it will appear in a cassette-loading version. Conversions to other machines are being considered, with the Amstrad being the most likely.

WIN A  
COPY  
OF

# Absolute Beginners

WHEN *Absolute Beginners* came out in April, most critics shot it out of the sky; it paid the price for being over-hyped. However rumour has it that some paying punters actually enjoyed the movie, our very own man-in-a-trenchcoat, Simon Poulter, reckons it was one of the best musicals he's ever seen (after *The Pyjama Game*, *Showboat* and *Midnight On The Orient Express*).

For this shameless admission we removed his boots and chained him to his green screen, gave him five copies of the new *Absolute Beginners* video and ordered him to devise a cryptic LM competition so that we can get rid of the damn things.

**LM:** What could be more exciting than a one-way ticket to Ludlow courtesy of Roger Kean's used-notes expenses pot?

**READER:** Champagne and oysters with Jean Alexander?

**LM:** Wrong party. Winning your own copy of *Absolute Beginners*.

**READER:** Gasp. But how?

**LM:** Easy, you just answer these easy questions:-

- 1) Which absolute beginner made his film debut as Colin?
- 2) Which luscious, pouting, gorgeous, sexy, horny (steady, -Ed) female person played Colin's girlfriend?
- 3) Ray Davies stars as Colin's dad. Which mega famous Sixties band does he front?
- 4) Pop mogul Harry Charms is in real life best known for making rude gestures at Una Stubbs and Michael Parkinson, he's also lent his name to the cockney rhyming slang for flared trousers. Who is he?
- 5) On which infamous Sex Pistols film did Julien Temple make his directorial debut?

Well that's the easy bit out of the way, all you have to do now is fill in this coupon, cut it out (or send a photocopy if you don't want to deface this collector's edition of LM) and bung it off to us here at LM. Entries should be sent to ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS, LM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB to arrive no later than 22 December. We'll pick the correct entries out of Simon Poulter's size ten boots, and the first five will each win an *Absolute Beginners* video.

LM says get weavin' . . .



## ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS COMPETITION

I reckon I'm so damned clever I must have won, but just in case I have, it would be useful if the video cassette I may have won matched my video machine, which is (please tick):

FORMAT: VHS  BETA

Anyway, here are my answers:

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

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# EUROMAX



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Coat in herringbone, sprinkled with coloured flecks from TOP MAN. £65.00

**W**HAT does the word 'over-coat' conjure up in the average male's frosty imagination? Some raw and chilling vista of trailing trenchcoats, overripe afghans and the odd dull duffle, perhaps?

Time to wrap up your parky preconceptions — it's not just the economic climate that's looking bleak. Leave the perfect He-man shivering in his T-shirt, for the Great Coat Revival is upon us. From dreadnoughts to fear-noughts, from Chester-fields to check coats, from mohair to dog-hair, here's a seasonal guide to the best (and worst) winter wrappers around.

#### MAN AT C&A

Despite the odd (very odd) gem of a garment, this much-maligned chain-store still depends on despised labels in the Younger Set and Classic Gent line. Ignore the ignominy and discover a double-breasted, belted tweedy number in dark or light grey. Half wool, half synthetic, with widish lapels, this one comes in herringbone or 'fleck' and goes for £59.99. Think on this possible improvement: collar turned UP, belt KNOTTED, and trilby pulled LOW for that 'I don't shop at Man At C&A' look. NB: beware mock flying jackets lined in, yes, red fake fur! So kitsch. Tethered to an electric

chain, they'll most likely fry your fingers at the lightest curious touch.

#### NEXT

Most of the coats in this yuppie-infested emporium will leave you at least £100 out of (your fully polyester-lined) pocket, so the best bet is to head straight for the macs. Pick of the bunch is a plain cotton job which hangs loosely to just below knee-length. No frills here, apart from a corduroy collar; it's single-breasted with a quilted paisley lining (cuts a dash in high winds . . .) and, for types who hate greasy cuffs and necks, it's washable. Definitely the 'cuddly casual' look, in stone or green, it comes in small, medium or large, and

# THE JOY OF FLECKS

Get more for your cashmere with **AMANDA WRAY** as she goes off the rails in search of a serious wrap. Pictures by BEEZER.

costs £49.99.

#### GEE2

Flecks, flecks, and more flecks. You enter the premises and you'd fancy yourself in an Isle of Wight sandstorm if it weren't for the pounding disco beat assailing your tympanic membrane. Two choices here fall within our price range. First, there's a very plain, dead straight, black and white dog's-tooth check affair, not unlike a carpet; synthetic/natural mix fabric, and dotty satin lining. Then there's a tweedy, lumpy 'blue and black fleck on grey' number in 50 per cent polyester, 40 per cent wool and '10 per cent floor scrapings' — the salesman said it, not me!

Both around £65. These coats are more charity-shop than chain-store — and the fancier they are, the cheaper they are. Result: not only is your morale reduced by going round with empty pockets, but the pockets belong to a coat better suited to a Crufts champion than your average pale male.

#### COLES

Traditional single-breasted 65-per-cent-cashmere overcoats in plain colours. At £80 these were the cheapest new cashmeres I found (and you should be able to pick up very tasty cashmere seconds for under £40). Then you have the showerproof look in, wait for it, cashmere and

nylon! From the sublime to the ridiculous? Thigh-length, zip-fronted, quilted lining, attached hood with drawstring—it sounds like something out of an SM manual. Also for the outdoor type is the 'flasher' mac—yes, they've gone official. Is it really such a popular pursuit? Limp young men look cool in 100-per-cent-cotton stone-coloured macs with soft puffy lining. £65, and showerproof. Enough said.

#### TOP MAN

The fastest seller here is, staggeringly, a three-quarter-length cream duffle coat: hood, toggles and stripy lining all for £50. Part-mohair, it also comes in grey, blue, black, red or green. The dreaded duffle has trodden a long, weary path since Field Marshal Montgomery popularised it in World War Two. If you're NOT a red brick student setting a trend, then bypass this exquisite durable and go for one of Top Man's light, baggy, single-breasted overcoats for around £50-£70. Her-ringbone sprinkled with coloured flecks is definitely flavour of the season (ie common as muck). Apparently, men tend to go for the darker shades, so why not break out and buy light—you've nothing to lose but drycleaner's bills...

#### BURTONS

More conservative here, and, one would expect, better quality, maintaining a traditional rather than a fashionable image. But it's a disappointing selection. Plump, perhaps, for a single-breasted simple navy overcoat with what resembles dog hairs all over it. The effect is strangely appealing, and the coat begs to be stroked! Only 35 per cent wool (can't be genuine canine), it does right up to the neck and costs £50. Otherwise go for, yes, let's hear it, a FLECKED herringbone tweed ('absolutely vogue,' eager assistants assure me) with a flapping lapel that just may curl in a February fog. Belted, and just below knee-length, this costs £70. Burtons have a larger range of sizes than the 'fashion' shops, from Lean Man (34" chest) up to Large Man (44" chest).

#### CAMDEN LOCK MARKET

If you live in London or the South-East, Camden Lock weekend market sells a



**Setting the latest trend in suave manliness, our very own RICHARD LOWE modelled the winter coats on these pages. The model fee alone should keep him in fish'n'chips for months.**

Half wool-half synthetic, in herringbone or fleck. Coat from MAN AT C&A. £59.99

vast selection of overcoats, mostly secondhand. Harris tweeds, gaberdines, leathers, Crombies, military motorbike coats, opera coats, frock coats, camel coats, greatcoats and not-so-great coats—the choice bedazzles. Check carefully for stains, holes, sweaty linings and frayed bits, and always try bargaining a few quid off the asking price.

Among the most prominent and permanent in Camden Lock are **Robin Betts** and **Antonio Perez**, in the black shed; they sell homemade, peacock-lined 'multi-wool pleat coats' for £65, and double-breasted Prince of Wales check coats for a bit more. The stuff's original, with that 'homespun' look.

**Chris Jay**, also in the black shed, sells long, belted Second World War motorbike macs in heavy gaberdine (£15-£20), leather army coats (strong shoulder muscles required) £75, and chunky pepper-

and-salt all-wool coats, £25. These are common all over Camden and £25 should be your upper limit.

**Sally Johnson**, in the white shed, specialises in 'no tat' quality men's gear. I'm in nirvana among her pure wool overcoats £30, tailcoats £35, cashmere and Scottish Crombies £45!

Get your skates on—this stall's a must.

In the alley, **Red Or Dead** can offer new three-quarter-length duffles in white or navy for £29. And if you thought Pavarotti was an Australian meringue, visit **Genovese** in the outside thoroughfare and try their long, dark, fitted Twenties opera coats. Velvet-collared and ultra-smart, you'll pay £25 to look just the ticket.

You'll have the last laugh strolling around in one of these tailor-made creations while the posers pay twice as much for something that'll only fall apart next season.

**Flecked, herringbone tweed from BURTONS. £59.99**



# REVIEWS



Video

Doc Brown — Mad Professor (Chris Lloyd) hangs by a thread from time itself.



Flavour-of-the-month — Michael J. Fox.

## MICHAEL J FOX

### Back To The Future

CIC

113 mins PG

**MARTY McFLY** (flavour-of-the-month star **Michael J Fox**) is an average American schoolkid with average parents, George and Lorraine (Crispin Glover and Lee Thompson). There's nothing really special about him — he leads an unexciting life in a small American town, is consistently late for school, has a nice girlfriend and plays in a rather dodgy rock band called The Pinheads. The only unusual thing about Marty is his pal, the unsuccessful inventor Doc Brown (the marvellous **Chris Lloyd**).

One night the Doc calls Marty and tells him to come to Twin Pines Mall, to see

his new invention — a time-machine built from a De Lorean car.

But it doesn't pay to tamper with De Loreans. Marty is inadvertently sent back into the past, to 5 November 1955. He discovers that there's not enough power in the time-machine for a return trip, and starts looking for a much younger Doc Brown, who might help him get back to the future.

Before finding the Doc, however, Marty accidentally saves his teenage father from being hit by a car and takes the bump himself. Unconscious, he's carried into the driver's house and nursed back to health by a

beautiful teenage girl who's fallen in love with him; trouble is, she's his future mum!

Marty manages to escape her clutches and finds the Doc, but before he can return to 1985 he has to turn Lorraine's over-romantic attentions toward George, otherwise they'll never meet, they'll never marry, and Marty will never exist...

The hilarious possibilities of time parallaxes are exploited with incredible attention to detail, right down to the Ronnie Reagan picture showing at the local movie-house. Marty's romp through the past has far-reaching future consequences, and the film has to be watched a couple of times to catch all the subtleties.

Director **Robert Zemeckis** has done a great job; the acting is superb, the action rushes along at breakneck speed, and the brilliant climax leaves the way wide open for a sequel. I can't wait!

**95%** JULIAN RIGNALL

■ *Dodging the sister drooling all over Michael J Fox, I managed to enjoy this absorbing film as much on video as in the cinema. The plot is original, and the ending works well enough; Back To The Future is well worth getting out.*

**90%** MIKE DUNN

■ *This mixture of science fiction, skateboards and Fifties nostalgia is very nearly a perfect entertainment film. The script is wittily clever, especially with the temporal jokes surrounding the central conundrum of time travel, and the action can hardly be faulted. And it's one of those films which appear to be simple, lightweight, fast fun, but hide a disturbing ability to keep popping scenes into your mind for days.*

**85%** ROGER KEAN

## Annihilator

CIC Video 90 mins 15

ANGELA TAYLOR, a 'beautiful, lovely' Angeleno who works and lives with her English boyfriend Robert, wins a week's holiday in Hawaii. On her return to LA, Flight 508 disappears off the radar—but her plane reappears an

with the passengers apparently none the worse for their delay. However, Angela (**Catherine Mary Stewart**) is no longer human, an unromantic little quirk which Robert (**Mark Lindsay Chapman**) finds it hard to overlook.

It threatens their relationship. At first he notices only her coldness, but back at work—a very flashy, trendy newspaper office—Angela has swapped her horror of electronics for a computer and starts writing pro-vivisectionist articles. She carries this new hobby a trifle far by killing the happy couple's dog, Boots, telling Robert the animal was run over.

To soothe Robert's grief, Angela suggests a romantic weekend in the wilds. But inevitably the idyll is shattered when her eyes start glowing red and she tries to drown him in a lake. In the ensuing bloody struggle, Robert narrowly escapes death and flattens Angela with the car, revealing her as a maniac robot (or 'Dynamatard') in human form. The car and mechanoid Angela explode—a pity, since this hides the evidence that Robert has saved the world, and the police think he's a simple murderer.



Annihilator opens in flashback with police cars chasing Robert through the city streets and into the arms of a mysterious woman who hides him and to whom he confides his unbelievable tale. The film then follows their attempts to track down the rest of the Dynamatards on Flight 508's passenger list.

'Do you like tofu-burgers?' the pre-change Angela asks Robert as they sit down to eat to the strains of Nik Kershaw. The deathly demi-veg, very 'here-and-now' dialogue is

typical of the film. Nothing rings true.

Oddest of all is the sudden, inexplicable MTV-style pop promo sequence that pops up in the middle of the film accompanying David Bowie's *ashes To Ashes*. Did Bowie lend his name to this?

**Mark Chapman** (whom I suspect of being Mark Lindsay Chapman) directs the stilted actors through a hilarious series of situations taken from any number of films. I detected traces of *Blade Runner*, *V, Come and Return of the Living Dead* (a Dynamatard attacks Robert in a forest of naked, swaying mannequin bodies), and *Close Encounters* (a young boy builds a mountain from his food); and of course the whole derivative mess owes plenty to *Terminator*.

But unlike *Terminator*, this one has no guts, pace, or thrills, and it lacks director James Cameron's touch. *Annihilator* isn't quite exploitative rubbish, but it certainly is unsatisfy-

ing—and the ending reveals its origins as a failed TV-series pilot.

**20% ROGER KEAN**

■ *Gosh! Wow! Freak out everybody! A cyborg invasion! What thrilling original stuff for a video! Despite the blurb on the cover, I didn't actually find this one all that bad. True, some scenes are predictable, but some are almost interesting. There could be more gore; when you expect to see guts plastered all over the screen, all you get is a few burnt-out PCBs. Oh well, it's worth a look if you can handle unoriginality.*

**25%** MIKE DUNN

■ *Annihilator is a mish-mash of material poached from other movies, hardly captivating, and the wide-open ending left me unsatisfied. The film is well-shot, but all the gloss is lost in the blight of Terahawks-style acting.*

*Annihilator is bad, banal and boring.*

**40% JULIAN RIGNALL**

Davies's show-stealing *Quiet Life* (claustrophobically shot in a cut-away house), all you have to do is hit the fast forward-button to get through the chunks of plot (or, if you're feeling really subversive, do a little home editing) and you're left with an instant party video.

Forget the flack, go rent it...

**80% MANDY LAWSON**

■ *I thought Absolute Beginners was going to be a watershed movie; in the event it was something of a washout. Still, it's an enjoyable, vibrant film, from the virtuosity of Julien Temple's opening tracking shot to the climactic finale. An audacious movie that'll be a classic one day.*

**95% CURTIS HUTCHINSON**

■ *Absolute Beginners is a joyous delight, brimming with life, excitement, colour and spirit. Colin MacInnes's novel is, anyway; Julien Temple's much-hyped film treatment is a bitter disappointment, and despite its lavish production, painstaking attention to detail, wonderful soundtrack and skilful choreography it fails to do justice to the original.*

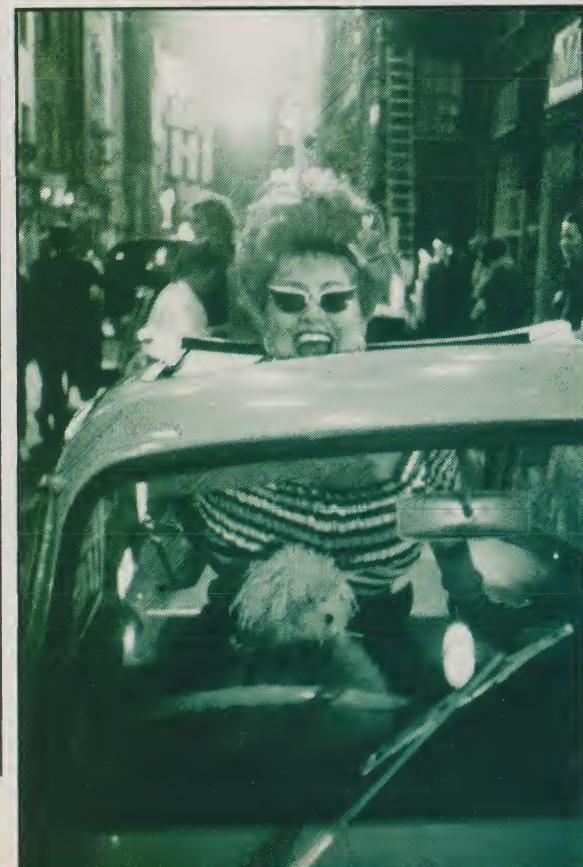
**50% RICHARD LOWE**

## EDDIE O'CONNELL, PATSY KENSIT

# Absolute Beginners

Palace 107 mins 15

All, David Bowie's spirited *That's Motivation* and Ray



# PERFECT SENSE

It is a dark and stormy night on Grovel Hill. The smell of burning martyrs hangs in the air. Gnarled peasant women are heard baying on the distant hills. The LM Apricot . . .

CH: So what's with all these percentages then, Paulie?

PS: It's a brill idea I had the other night while I was working out my expenses in the bath.

RL: Sounds a bit wet to me.

PS: No, it's a really groovy idea. We take a video, book end.

SP: But is it upfront enough?

PS: Yep. It's wild, rad, really alternative and it's going down now right here. (Pass the curry.) If you like what you've seen, read or heard, then you give it 100%, if you think it's a pile of tosh then you're talking about 25% or under. Then we can get two other people to do alternative reviews, just like in *Zzap!*, *Crash* and *Amtix*!

## SYLVESTER STALLONE Rocky IV

Warner Home Video

91 mins

PG

IF World War Three could be fought on the movie screens of Western Europe, I'd sleep a lot safer.

The appalling *Red Dawn*, *Rambo*, and more recently *Top Gun* suggest that if the

No such luck, eh?

Rocky, his coach and his father leave for the USSR to start training. Much iron is pumped and much sweat sprayed as the film contrasts the computerised



next one broke out the Americans would win it hands down. No surprise, then, to learn that Sylvester Stallone is a good chum of the Six-Gun Gipper of Capitol Hill.

*Rocky IV* is yet another exercise in Commie-bashing, packed with every cynical right-wing cliché ever conceived of outside the Pentagon.

There's the RUSSIAN, a ten-foot piece of Ukrainian nastiness. He's the BAD-DIE. Rocky Balboa is an AMERICAN boxer and therefore he's the GOODIE. Balboa is out to revenge the slaying of his sparring partner (and fellow AMERICAN, Apollo Creed) by the RUSSIAN.

So the scene is set, East v West in Moscow, and Rocky has the honour of his word to defend: 'I won't get hurt,' he promises his son.

techno-training of Drago with Rocky doing his bit, lifting heavy farm equipment, helping snowbound horse-and-traps and generally making do with The Little House On The Steppe for a gym.

All this physical bullshit builds to a crucial climax — THE FIGHT. And what a fight it is, 20 minutes of heavy slugging with some excruciating wallops coming over on the soundtrack, culminating in Drago's destruction and an emotive speech by Rocky IV . . . worra man!

If this is your first ever Rocky movie then you ain't missed anything; this dog's-breakfast would probably put you off cinema for good. Stallone's acting ability (or should that be disability?) is mirrored by his direction and, worse yet, his writing.

beats him in every conceivable physical asset — it's laughable. The acting is pretty poor all round, and it gets quite painful watching Sylvester Stallone's three brain cells going into overdrive as he tries to speak. Don't waste your time on this garbage.

15% JULIAN RIGNALL

■ This one's packed with suspense: I wonder who's going to win?!! A very, very predictable film, with a rather unfortunate scenario: a seven-foot Russian getting beaten up by Stallone, whom he dwarfs. Rocky IV is much like the others in the series, and falls back too much on the previous films; Rocky reminiscences a lot. On the other hand, if more of the same is all you want, then you'll love this.

20% MIKE DUNN

## PRINCE Under The Cherry Moon

Warner Home Video

93 mins

15

A FILM BY PRINCE. That's what it says at the end of the ponderously slow opening credits and that's exactly what this is — Prince, more Prince and yet more Prince. The man's got a lot of balls if he's prepared to take all the blame for this abomination.

His *Purples* stars as an oily lounge-lizard/gigolo/musician in this lacklustre black-and-white outing to the playground of the international jet set on the French Riviera. As Christopher Tracy he aims to get rich and get laid (surprise, surprise), and like Bob Geldof he scores on both points.



movies like *Rambo* and *Beverly Hills Cop* will go to any lengths to keep the young lovers apart.

A bemused, though unembarrassed, Prince prances through the proceedings in eye-wateringly tight trousers and takes his shirt off quite a lot. The guy can't act but he sure can pose, and he treats each scene like some gloriously camp photo session; when someone feeds him a line he pauses, looks skywards and checks his coiffure before answering.

And what happened to all those songs? There are 17 numbers listed in the credits but you only ever hear the briefest incidental snatches. Weird.

*Under The Cherry Moon* is downright awful, though like so many turkeys it does have a certain charm; Prince plays for laughs and gets more than he's bargained for. But Christopher Tracy should stick to writing songs for The Bangles.

20% CURTIS HUTCHINSON

■ After the triumph of *Purple Rain* HRH really comes a cropper with this pile of dog's-do. I spent the first half of the video waiting for it to burst into glorious Technicolor and it never happened; if I want to see a boring black-and-white film I can switch on BBC2.

10% MARY LAWSON

■ Pretentious even by video standards, this draggy fantasy concentrates on a dull story at the expense of music. Buy the album and watch the cover; Under The Cherry Moon stinks.

5% THE ZAPPER

# MUSIC

## PET SHOP BOYS Disco

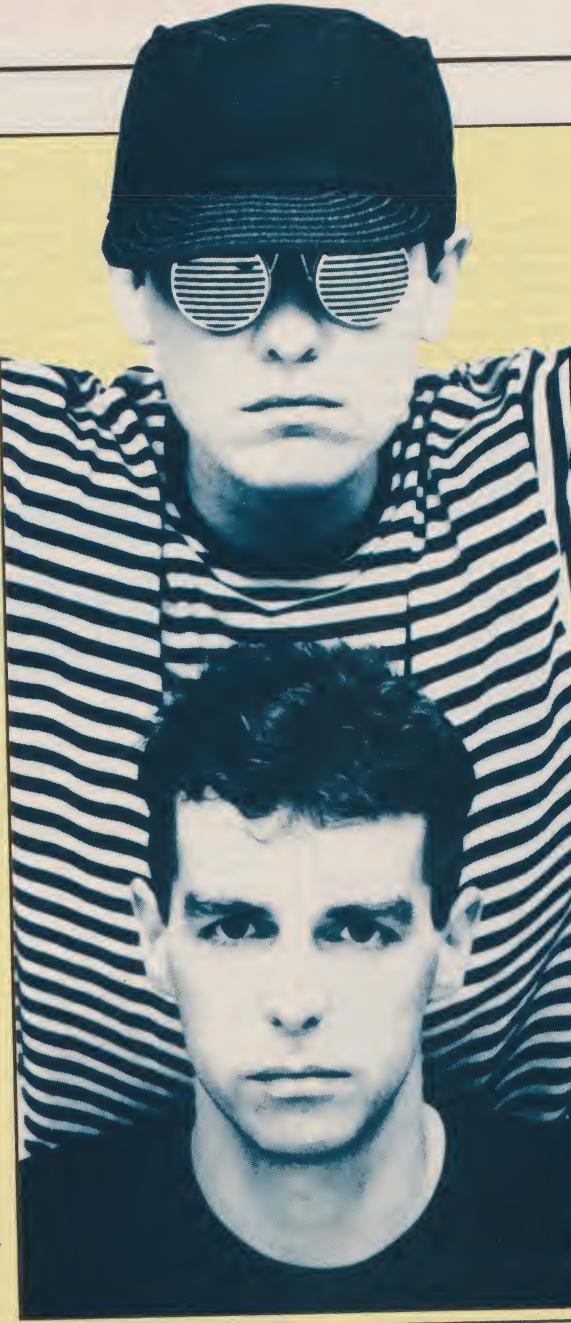
Parlophone

THIS IS cynically billed as the Pet Shop Boys' new 'album', but they're following the precedent set by Howard Jones and Go West and releasing an album of remixes, just in time for Christmas. Wizzo . . .

With a title that not even K-Tel have dared use, *Disco* is a collection of six remixes — four singles and two B-sides. Far and away the best tracks are Shep Pettibone's excellent remixes of *Love Comes Quickly* and the first PSB hit, *West End Girls*.

Pettibone (whose full name is almost an anagram of Pet Shop Boys) gives the first of these a harder, club-orientated feel, with a solid, pounding backbeat. The *West End Girls* remix is just an extension of the seven-inch which was one of the best records around a year ago; it's still more than welcome.

The remix of *Opportunities*, a twice-released hit-that-should-have-been, is as wonderful as the seven-inch. To appreciate the value of such a track just use this easy-to-follow LM guide: 1) Turn up stereo to optimum neighbour-annoyance level 2) Start music 3) Dance around room to barely-concealed concern of cohabitants/colleagues 4) Realise what a prat you look 5) Hide in convenient broom-cupboard



## PAUL YOUNG Between Two Fires

CBS

PAUL YOUNG has grown up. Gone are the teen popsters of his first two LPs and the epitaphs for Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding. Instead he puts rock, soul and R&B through the Hugh Padgham production microwave and cooks up a grown-up rock record of outstanding quality.

Padgham's influence is most notable on *Wonderland*, where the atmospherics and digitised percussion make Young sound a bit like Genesis. The opening track *Some People* could have been a Simple Minds outtake, while *Prisoner Of Conscience* has

strong Heaven 17 overtones.

Young seems to be trying to prove himself to those who thought he was just trying to be a revivalist pop star, a sophisticated Shakin' Stevens. And he succeeds on this album.

The vocal is still Otis, casual Redding-esque grunts inserted as the music suggests. The music is 1986 white soul, completing the inevitable triptych of Young, Go West and of course Hall And Oates.

Welcome to the yuppie world, Paul.

70% SIMON POULTER

When you've struggled for years in a cabaret soul group that packed the pun-



until it's safe to come out.

Not far behind in my esteem is the Arthur Baker remix of *In The Night*, the B-side to *Love Comes Quickly*; it's a great funk of hi-energy Fairlight fun (hold that alliteration!), remarkably similar to *Opportunities*.

The Julian 'no relation' Mendelssohn remix of the recent hit *Suburbia* is the only real bloop on the album, featuring inexplicable barking dogs, explosions and breaking windows; try to imagine the Young Ones B-side crossed with the *EastEnders* theme

Though at times they seem like an overdose of Sample and Sequence, we can look forward to the new Pet Shop Boys album currently in the works. And as this set is being sold as a budget-priced album it's well worth the time of all PSB freaks. Pass me that BOY cap!

80% SIMON POULTER

■ PSB have done nothing more for this cheeky album than rehashed six previously-released tracks, turned the drum machine up and gone for a walk. Seems they can't resist an opportunity to make money.

10% CURTIS HUTCHINSON

■ A con, typical of the Pet Shop Boys; they get a couple of hits, think they're the bee's knees and then turn out this turgid load of tosh. An embarrassing record, even at a budget price.

-55% PAUL STRANGE

■ I'd never listened seriously to Paul Young and I was pleasantly surprised by *Between Two Fires*. This LP would go down well at a party; the music is easy to dance to and the tracks are well placed, with the best at the beginning and the worst toward the end. The lyrics live up to my image of Young — wishy-washy love songs and ballads about a lonely boy who's just been dumped by his missus. I couldn't listen to this for long, but it's good in small doses.

75% BEN STONE

## XTC

### Skylarking

Virgin

NEVER in their long and distinguished career have XTC made a duff record. They've made a few mediocre ones (*Mummer* was a tad patchy and *English Settlement* rambled uncontrollably at times), but they've always managed to slip one or two glistening gems into each LP while keeping the quality control set high for all tracks.

But despite their laudable attention to detail, XTC have outlived their usefulness. When they perfected their distinctive and intricate blend of student pop (best highlighted on the classic *Black Sea* LP) they were already about six or seven years out of date; now they're beginning to sound senile.

Still, *Skylarking* is a good LP, and its thematic approach is intriguing. The opener, *Drowning In Summer's Cauldron*, billows in on banks of clicking crikets and modulating synths, producing a perfect picture of a heady, brown-mopping July afternoon in the countryside.

Just as you're about to drift off, the track segues effortlessly into *Grass*. Romantic rustic themes swirl and twirl as the song develops, finally fading into a reassertion of the opening cut. Pretty conceptual, man.

*Ballet For A Rainy Day* pulls us quickly into autumnal glory, while *1000 Umbrellas* shivers and shudders as the November heavens open, pouring discontent into a dying year.

*Season Cycle* — a bit of a corker — questions the

ters into sweaty concert halls but failed to set the tills a-ring and the charts ablaze, and you suddenly stumble on a formula that turns you into a wealthy chart-topper almost overnight, it's tempting to carry on mining the same rich seam. Paul Young's no fool and he's crafted an LP that will slot comfortably next to *No Parlez* and *The Secret Of Association* in every yuppie record rack. Very nice it is too: lots of interesting noises, heartfelt lyrics, a comfortable sound that might be the perfect backdrop to a game of *Trivial Pursuit*, and a cracking potential single in *Why Does A Man Have To Be Strong?*.

55% RICHARD LOWE

natural powers that govern our lives, and restates the pastoral theme that dominates the LP's first side. Perhaps XTC should consider this one for their next single.

Side Two deals more directly with human experience. *Earn Enough For Us* tells of a young man's efforts to support his girl and his household. *Big Day* discusses the implications and complications of marriage. *Another Satellite* comments on the passing of years, and *Dying* is an overpowering, highly intimate view of our inevitable fate, provoked by the death of a loved one. Disturbing stuff.

The album's highlight is *The Man Who Sailed Around His Soul*. XTC tackle an unfamiliar musical area in this boisterous stab at cool jazz, and come up trumps. It's probably one of their finest tracks ever.

Like all XTC albums,

*Skylarking* grows and improves with repeated plays. It could prove to be one of their biggest LPs to date. Get it.

75% PAUL STRANGE

■ *XTC may be perennial misfits, but they make consistently interesting records; this time round it's pleasant soft-focus psychedelia, strongly reminiscent of mid-period Beatles. As ever, XTC have come up with a surefire commercial failure.*

65% RICHARD LOWE

■ *The first time I listened to this XTC album I checked several times to see if my Walkman batteries were flat. The musical style may be strictly for fans, but the album's strongest point is the lyrics. The song-list gives an idea: In A Sacrificial Bonfire, Dying, That's Really Super, Supergirl, and so on.*

65% MIKE DUNN

them. *Through The Barricades* may be dated, clichéd, shallow, pompous mush-rock, but as dated, clichéd, shallow, pompous mush-rock goes it's amusing and highly enjoyable.

You're probably familiar with the two singles this LP has already spawned: the would-be terrace anthem *Fight For Ourselves* and the title track, that really slushy one about being 'born on different sides of life' and 'making love on wastelands' (it knackers your elbows, you know).

Well, the rest of the songs follow pretty much the same format as these two — starting with a verse bit that chugs along aimlessly before lurching, with all the subtlety of an articulated lorry shifting from fourth gear to first at 70mph, into a rousing singalong chorus. The fast songs have lots of 'stinging guitar' and saxophone bits; the slow songs have lots of 'moody piano' and saxophone bits.

All highly enjoyable stuff, especially if you stand in front of the bedroom mirror posing and swaggering with a tennis racquet or similar guitar substitute — and judging from their stage antics these days, that's how the Kemp brothers spent a good deal of their adolescence.

If they're appearing at a cavernous arena near you I'd warmly recommend a visit. They're much more fun than Bruce Springsteen, and such good-looking boys too — especially in their new studded belts and leather boots.

60% RICHARD LOWE

■ *Fight For Ourselves and Through The Barricades are great singles, and Swept completes the hat trick. The five other songs on this LP are second-rate fillers, though, and even the most devoted fan will feel cheated.*

30% DE VILLE

■ *Spandau Ballet are a spent force. The True LP was decent enough as fake soul, but since then they've gone steadily downhill; they've nothing new to offer musically, and were never very gifted lyrically.* Through The Barricades is the sound of clapped-out old clotheshorses trying to make as much money as possible before they fade into well-deserved obscurity.

5% THE ZAPPER

## Round the Kemp fire

### SPANDAU BALLET

### Through The Barricades

CBS

THERE'S this 'eerie' intro bit — water running through a gutter, the click of heels on the pavement, a clap of thunder, etc — then a 'haunting' little piano ditty before the guitarist launches into a meaty power-chorded riff that Eddie Van Halen would be proud of... ah, it must be one of those conceptual heavy rock bands from the Seventies, or Elton John trying to be clever.

It's only when that familiar saxophone enters stage right that suspicions are aroused, and then the arrival of that unmistakable voice hammers home the awful truth... Spandau Ballet, the foppish suburban soulboys who used to heap so much unbridled scorn on those nasty, dirty, old-fashioned rockers, have turned into a bona fide made-for-MTV Rock Band.

I suppose the signs were there when Martin Kemp described Live Aid as 'the Woodstock of our generation' and, even earlier, in that Spandau appearance on *The Tube* which Gary Kemp obviously mistook for a Pete Townsend impersonator.

nation contest.

Never was a group so arrogant and self-assured as Spandau Ballet when they first emerged from the trendy London club scene in their velvet knickerbockers, offering a radical new alternative to dreary old rock'n'roll and vowing to change the face of 'youth culture' (whatever that may be).

And never has a group so blatantly and so brazenly gone back on their word.

The logic behind this transformation is a familiar and predictable one. Spandau will be billing the eight songs on this LP as their 'new', 'harder' sound, appropriate for the times, etc, but up in the CBS boardroom the executives and marketing men are no doubt rubbing their hands with glee, hailing *Through The Barricades* as the one that's going to turn Messrs Kemp, Kemp, Hadlee, Norman and Keeble into dollar millionaires, and anticipating a rich return on the considerable investment they've made in Spandau Ballet Limited.

And the best of luck to

them. *Spandau Ballet are a spent force. The True LP was decent enough as fake soul, but since then they've gone steadily downhill; they've nothing new to offer musically, and were never very gifted lyrically.* Through The Barricades is the sound of clapped-out old clotheshorses trying to make as much money as possible before they fade into well-deserved obscurity.

5% THE ZAPPER

# SINGLES

Reviewed this month by the man whose boots were made for walking, SIMON POULTER.

OH dear: time for that well-known parlour game, Hack's Predicament.

Bob Geldof's first solo single, *This Is The World Calling* (Mercury), is giving me problems. Do I slate the record for what it is (bad), or do I compromise and say Bob's got a new record out, what a nice man he is, what a nice denim jacket he has, and hasn't Fifi Trixibelle got her Daddy's eyes?

I'll take the first option and face the flack like a man. Pity his house depends on this record.



Robert Palmer has re-released *Discipline Of Love* (Island) from the *Riptide* LP. Sounds like his record company see it as a safe bet following two smashes on both sides of the Atlantic divide, and it should do well because he's so *coooooool* (and he makes some very sexist, and very nice, videos).

On the other hand, New Model Army aren't duds and they're not that musical either. Their latest, *51st State*, has some pretty crass lyrics: 'We're WASPs, proud American sons/ we know how to clean our teeth and how to strip down a gun'. Brilliant, eh? Not totally unlike The The's excellent *51st State Of America*. Show them no sympathy.

Christ! Sheffield's hairy heavies, Saxon, have a new single. Roger Kean wants to use the standard Saxon press picture because he knows it upsets Paul Strange—but batten down the hatches, send Hutchinson

son off to his car-maintenance lesson, and do a runner. *Rock The Nations* (EMI) is horrible.

As advance warning of her forthcoming greatest-hits LP, Kate Bush has released *Experiment IV* (EMI), a prophecy of a world



where music is used as a destructive weapon. Heavy man. Could be a surplus track from the *Hounds Of Love* LP, since it uses a snatch of Pink Floyd's *Wall* helicopter again. Good, though.

With an inspired title, *Disco Aid's Give, Give, Give* (EMI/Total Control) is one of two, yes, two charity records currently available. Looking at the list of artists involved, it seems as if the merest hint of a disco connection could have earned you space at the recording session. The Disco Aid charity donates the royalties six ways, some going to Band Aid, but if you feel generous you could save your stylus the hassle and donate direct to the Disco Aid Trust.

The other tin-rattler is *Live In World* (EMI) by the Anti-Heroin Project. Again, it's all in a good cause—but what a bloody awful song. This one boasts an even bigger list of pop luminaries than *Disco Aid* (as diverse as Daryl Panday, Robin Gibb and Bill Oddie), and again you can cut out the middleman and donate direct without any loss of conscience.

Two of my current faves are King Kurt's *America* (Polydor), and *Georgie Fame's Samba* (Chrysalis). Kurt's latest effort is a brilliant cover of the *West Side Story* number — get your party going with it. While you're about it, shove on



Fame's Samba, the follow up to *New York Afternoon* and a cover of a song by Gilberto Gil that was billed as the summer song of 85. Great.

And **Billy Bragg's** turned up with a cracker, too — *Greetings To The New Brunette* (Go! Discs) is a further example of his lyrical eloquence, and very good it is.

Talking of Go!, there's a new single from **His Latest Flame**, stable-mates of both Bragg and The House-martins. Unfortunately *Stop The Tide* misses the mark. I wonder if they play football?



Worthy of its own separate insert is **Courtney Pine's** *Children Of The Ghetto* (Island). The ex-Jazz Warrior and one-time Working Weeker's first single, it's a sublime piece of soulful social comment set to cool jazz. I wish him well.

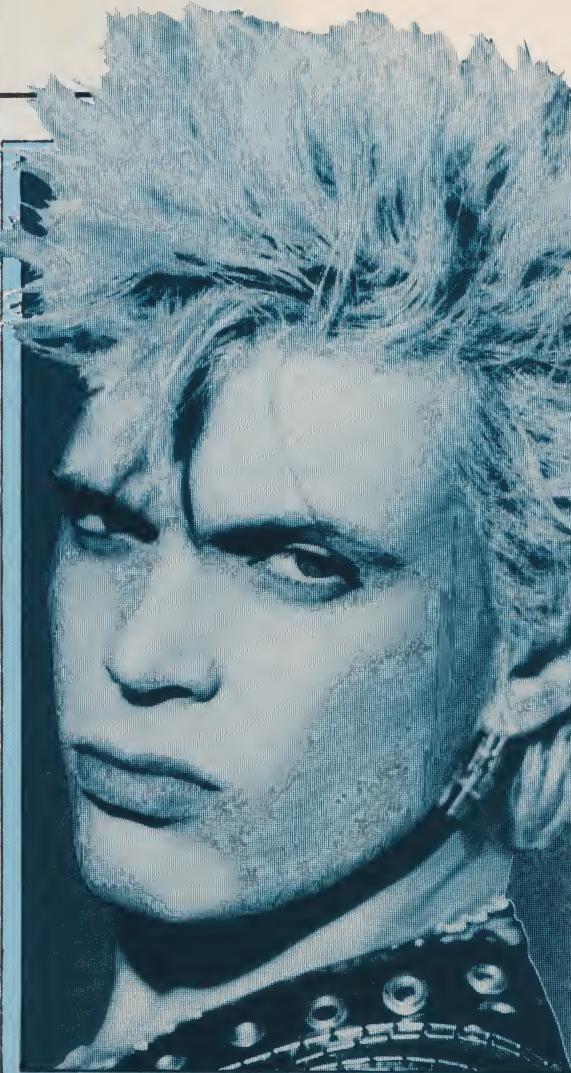
If there was any justice in the music business, **Hurr-rah!**'s excellent *Sweet Sanity* would steam up the charts. As one of Kitchen-ware's first signings two or three years ago, they now deserve to break through the commercial barrier.



And finally, bloopers of the month has to be **Derek Jameson's** *Do They Mean Us?* (Polydor). Heave . . .

Not far behind is **Mel Smith**. He's normally a good giggle in the musical items on TV but he dies the death with *Tremblin'*. Listen, Mel, Tenpole Tudor did this sort of thing a lot better in *Absolute Beginners*. Tragic.

I throw in the towel.



## BILLY IDOL

# Whiplash Smile

Chrysalis

IF EVER there was an artist to make life difficult for record-shop staff, it's Billy Idol. Do you file his records under heavy metal, punk, FM, or in a far away place with the Sputniks? *Whiplash Smile* won't help; it's a very varied LP.

If you were desperate to pigeonhole Idol's music, you'd have to create a new category for him, *techno-punk*. The programmed percussion and the sequenced blips and splats that pepper this album sound like Jean-Michel Jarre signed onto the Fourth And Broadway label. Add that lot to the HM guitars which also dominate the LP, and the overall effect is a hi-tech *Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle*.

The constant 'chugga-chugga' of the guitar never ceases (even on the slower tracks where it's just a bit quieter), and on *Beyond Belief* there's a set of guitar riffs suspiciously similar to the bonking track on Frankie's *Pleasuredome* album. Very original.

But *Whiplash Smile* is still a well-crafted piece of work, even if it's not that far

removed from previous Idol material.

**70% SIMON POULTER**

■ *Very tedious. There's not enough punch, not enough firepower, not enough clout and too much posing. If Idol got his shit together and stuck with material as strong as *White Wedding*, he'd have a cracking great album. But as it is, *Whiplash Smile* is a grave disappointment.*

**30% PAUL STRANGE**

■ *Old sneery-lip is back with his distinctive brand of sanitised punk. The peroxide prat does a great impersonation of Jim Morrison crossed with post-burger Presley, all set to an innocuous techno-funk backbeat. Despite all the histrionics, the clenched-fist posturings and the rebel yells, Idol never sounds as angry as he'd have us believe, just slightly annoyed — like me after sitting through this album.*

**15% CURTIS HUTCHINSON**

## Sten guns in Knightsbridge

### BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE No 10 Upping Street CBS

IT all sounds so great on paper — a wicked, potent brew of the sharpest rock and the baddest rap, spiced with funk and reggae and peppered with cut-up clips of dialogue and delivered with fire, skill, guts and bravado.

Oh yes, Big Audio Dynamite certainly talked a great record but, like their stylistic cousins Sigue Sigue Sputnik, failed to deliver the goods. *No 10 Upping Street* isn't quite the awesome opus we've been promised — yet nor is it too much of a disappointment.

Mainman Mick Jones has made up and teamed up with former mentor and partner Joe Strummer (five of the new tracks bear the hallowed Strummer-Jones hallmark), and the whole

affair is shadowed by the ghost of The Clash. The eclectic pastiche of the music and the romantic glorification of street violence that runs through the lyrics serve to remind us that these are the boys who jetted over to Belfast for a photo-session, who wore jackets emblazoned with such posturing slogans as 'sten-guns in Knightsbridge' — and who toned it all down for a slot on MTV next to REO Speedwagon.

*No 10 Upping Street* sounds tame when it should be torrid, Jones and Letts wail weedily when they should be roaring, songs like *Dial A Hitman* and *Ticket* keep their tongue in cheek rather than fire in their belly and, despite sophisticated digi-

tal recording and production, the overall sound is puny and limp.

Not that the LP doesn't have its moments of glory and splendour — *C'Mon Every Beatbox* is a marvellous modern reiteration of *Summertime Blues*, *V Thirteen* echoes the best elements of mid-period Clash, and the whole thing gels for once on *Sightsee MC*, a guided tour through the mythical splendour and miserable squalor of night-time London town.

And in a year when most rock music has been as dull and stagnant as last week's dishwater, we must be thankful for such rare moments of inspiration.

**65% RICHARD LOWE**

■ *Stuff the Sputniks, BAD are the future of rock'n'roll! This is creativity at its most fruitful, a mixture of hip-hop, FX and social spite.*

*Joe Strummer co-produced and co-wrote some of the tracks; the best are Mick Jones/Don Letts compositions. BAD are as original as Chas Jankel and Ian Dury, and worthy successors.*

**80% SIMON POULTER**

■ *I was really happy with BAD's last LP — there were some good tracks on it and I loved Medicine Show despite the odd effects and inaudible lyrics.*

*But after a good listen to No 10 Upping Street I could only gibber. Tracks like Hollywood Boulevard confirm that BAD haven't lost their unique sound, but overall the album features too much hip-hop. And the band just can't produce good hip-hop records; listen to C'mon Every Beatbox.*

*I don't really like this album, but maybe it'll grow on me.*

**55% BEN STONE**

### THE STRANGLERS Dreamtime Epic

WITHOUT doubt *Dreamtime* is the most successful Stranglers LP for years. Nearly all the tracks are provocatively persuasive pieces of crafted pop and there are welcome signs that the band are returning to the firepower of their

early days in the late Seventies.

The LP works well because of its fresh, crystal-clear production and timeless material. And if you delve beneath the outer layers you'll discover an idea binding some tracks together.

According to Hugh Cornwell, 'dreamtime' is the nearest English translation to a word of the Australian Aborigines. They believe they're related to natural objects like trees and rocks, and when they die they become part of the environment. But mining on their lands has destroyed the spiritual life of the Aborigines. Pretty heavy, huh?

This concern with preserving environments, habitats and civilisations is echoed in *Mayan Skies* and *So Precious*.

Mind you, if you're listening with only half an ear this conceptual stuff is likely to pass you by. In straight musical terms the LP romps home, particular highlights being the uplifting and successful single *Always The Sun*, the plodding but effective title track, the raucous, lashing *Was It You*, and the chugging *Ghost Train*.

All in all, a surprisingly powerful album which shows that The Stranglers are still a force to be reckoned with.

#### 80% PAUL STRANGE

**■** The grand-daddies have really got it together for this one. Forget Uncle Hugh's Pseud's-Corner ramblings about reincarnated Aborigines (see above, and interview page 69); just sit back and let it grow on you. And grow it will. Their finest effort since *The Raven*.

85%

CURTIS HUTCHINSON

**■** After giving Dreamtime a good listen, I begin to wonder why The Stranglers don't feature more heavily in my album collection. Not laying any claims to being a Stranglers fan, I was surprised at the 'versatility' of the LP; I could enjoy it as much at low volume as when it was killing my eardrums. Now, having been able to listen to *Nice In Nice* properly, I reckon it should have been a bigger hit; I hope I won't have to say that about the album.

85% MIKE DUNN

#### CHINA CRISIS What Price Paradise? Virgin

I USED to hate China Crisis; there was always something inherently twee about their music and appearance.

But then along came Steely Dan's Walter Becker. He sold me on China Crisis last year with his production of *Flaunt The Imperfection*, and in 40-odd minutes I decided that China Crisis weren't that bad after all. Quite good, really. Listenable.

And on *What Price Paradise?*, Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley have picked up the Becker production legacy without making any compromises.

If this album is a violent reaction to the... *Fire And Steel* phase of clever-clever, boring-boring smugness, China Crisis have done it with no holds barred. There are some fine, assertive tracks: the single *Arizona Sky* and *We Do The Same*. And at times there are similarities to Dexy's Midnight Runners, particularly in *World's Apart* and *June Bride*.

The soulful pop of the last album is still there, festering beneath the surface, but the Crises seem to have found a new direction in the atmospheric moodiness of *Hampton Beach*. Quite apart from the Mersey connection, this is very much a melancholy Beatley song.

*What Price Paradise?* is the strongest and best album from China Crisis yet.

#### 75% SIMON POULTER

**■** After the decidedly poppy *Flaunt The Imperfection*, *Garry, Eddie and Co* release this much harder—and better—album. *What Price Paradise?* goes that important one step further and my ears are happier for the experience.

#### 80% JENNY BAKER

**■** Liverpool's wimp 'rockers' continue their fiendish plan to dope the record-buying public. I'm getting tired of *China Crisis* pumping out Beatleish tunes and 'aren't-we-oh-so-clever' lyrics. Musical Horlicks.

#### 15% THE ZAPPER

#### HARRY AND MICHAEL MEDVED Son Of Golden Turkey Awards

Angus & Robertson 218pp £7.95 paperback

WILD BEYOND BELIEF!  
HUMAN GARBAGE — IN  
THE SICKEST LOVE PAR-  
TIES!

WHEN THEY SOCK IT TO  
A GIRL — SHE FEELS IT!  
DEPRaved BEYOND  
DESCRIPTION — A NEW  
KIND OF ABNORMAL  
LOVE!  
WARPED WOMEN! FAN-  
TASTIC FIGHTS!

'ALLO 'ALLO, what 'ave we 'ere then? A new driller-killer porno-flick snuff movie?

No, it's only the advertising blurb for *Satan's Sadists* (1969), according to the authors of this hilarious romp through some of the films Hollywood would rather were forgotten. In fact *Satan's Sadists* was a daft biker film starring the squeaky-clean musical actor Russ Tamblyn.

Harry and Michael Medved are famous for the first *Golden Turkey Awards*, the book which launched their TV career as the hosts of spoofed-up 'Oscar' ceremonies for the worst films ever made.

*Son Of* goes further, covering a farmyardful of new, previously un-rediscovered turkeys as well as some better known epics that bombed from the moment the cameras began to roll. There's some fascinating trivia, too. Did you know that...

Raymond Burr (Perry Mason/Ironsides) played an ape in *Bride Of The Gorilla* (1951)? Linda Evans (Dynasty's Krystle) went raunchy-surfing in *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965)? Ronnie Reagan (the well-known one) should have played Rick in *Casablanca* (1942) and later suffered delusions that he was Humphrey Bogart? Tom Selleck (Magnum P.I.) was a corpse in *Coma* (1978)? Larry Hagman (J.R.) got devoured by a giant jelly while taking a leak in *Son Of Blob* (1972)? Or that Joan Collins (bitch goddess) got off more lightly when she wasn't quite eaten by colossal ants in *Empire Of The Ants* (1977)?

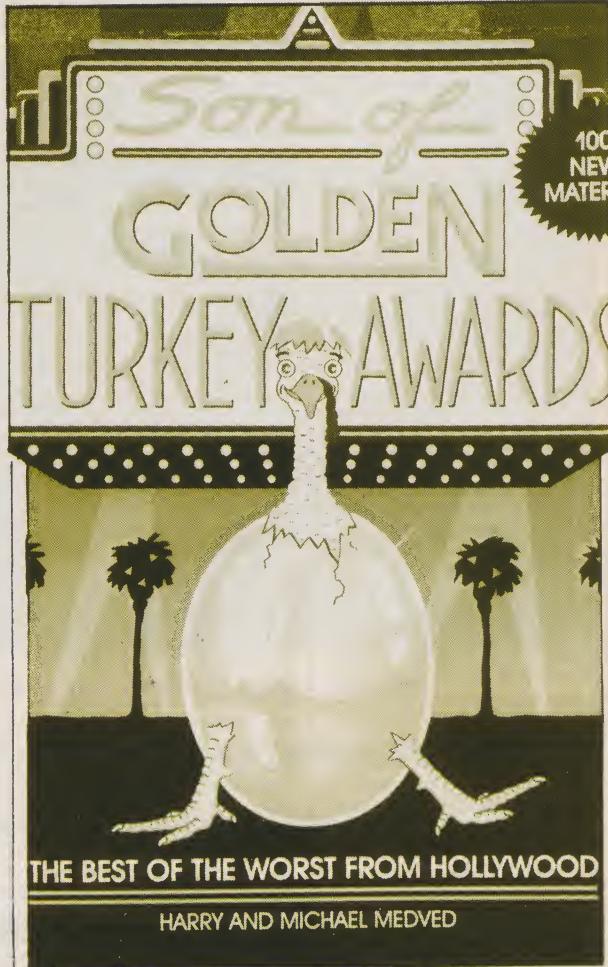
You didn't, did you, and you'll have to buy this book immediately.

The Brothers Medved write in a lucidly cynical manner that never quite hides their admiration for sheer celluloid badness, inept acting and hysterical scripting, and the description of *Wild Women Of Wonga* (in the category for most primitive male chauvinist fantasy) is almost worth the price of the book in itself.

This super-tacky production caught the attention of the great dramatist Tennessee Williams, who attended location shoots to the excited consternation of the cast. It turned out, however, that he was only hoping to date one of the flamboyant Miami beach musclemen hired in as a wild Wongan.

It's the details like this that make *Son Of Golden Turkey Awards* a great read and a stocking-filler must for film freaks. You have to get a look at the most laughable concept for an outer-space invader...

90% ROGER KEAN



## LEWIS CHESTER Tooth & Claw — The Inside Story Of Spitting Image

Faber And Faber

200pp

£3.95 paperback

WHILE I was reading this book the BBC were repeating some vintage material in their '50 years of television' celebrations. One show in particular interested me: *That Was The Week That Was*, the weekly revue from the early 60s which made the names of David Frost and Willie Rushton and on which, on one legendary occasion, a member of the audience walked up to Bernard Levin in mid-monologue and delivered a resounding right-hander which knocked Levin off his stool.

TW3, as it came to be known, was a bit rough around the edges, but it

was fresh, it was original, it took risks, and it was *live*.

Will we be seeing repeats of *Spitting Image* in 20 years' time? I doubt it — the show's topical satire simply isn't up to it. And that's why this book, the story of the show's inception and of its internal politics, personality clashes and crises, is not the most gripping of tales; *Spitting Image* is a programme which seldom fulfills the high promise it holds for millions, and only succeeds because there's no competition in TV satire.

If *Tooth & Claw* were fiction, I'd accuse author Lewis Chester of poor characterisation; the only

people whose personalities come across from its pages are the master puppeteers Fluck and Law themselves, who, I'm relieved to learn, still wonder what the hell they've got themselves into. And so the fine detail of budgets, resignations and board-meetings is of no interest to a reader who knows little and cares less about the characters of this real-life drama.

Like some of the show's more obscure in-jokes, this book will appeal to 'media' people but leave the rest of us baffled, wondering whether it really merits all this attention.

There are some funny stories, as well as a tantalising glimpse into the contents of the pilot show for *Spitting Image*, which for contractual reasons will never be broadcast. Among the sketches was a mass self-disembowelment ses-

sion by a group of Japanese businessmen, involving knives, offal, sausages, cocktail sticks and glaceé cherries.

It's also interesting to know that the producers once seriously considered calling the show *The Enough Money For A New Mental Hospital Show*, and that lampoons of the Royal Family were cut from the first show because of an impending Royal visit to Central Television's headquarters. The Royals feature heavily; an entire chapter is dedicated to the episode with the Queen Mother, whose impending appearance as a *Spitting Image* character prompted the horrified *Daily Express* to describe Her Royal Highness as 'untouchable' by man and puppet alike.

In the most interesting chapter of his book, Lewis Chester asks some of the

show's victims how they like their puppets. Liverpool leftie Derek Hatton says that his appearance on *Spitting Image* was a 'recognition of what we have achieved in this city'; Terry Wogan's wishes he 'didn't sound so much like Eamonn Andrews'; David Steel wonders why his puppet is 'so small, when I am in fact noticeably taller than Neil Kinnock'.

If the book comes to any conclusion, it's that satire is an essential part of any healthy society. It's a sign of the times, though, that a moderately funny show like *Spitting Image* should attract so much flak when you consider what they got away with on TW3 20 years ago. It's also a sign of the times that *Spitting Image* is regarded as important enough to have books written about it.

65% DAVID CHEAL

BRIAN ALDISS

## Trillion Year Spree

Collancz £15 hardback, £9.95 paperback (512pp)

'The closer we come to the present day the harder it becomes to make a clear judgement on the stature and health of the SF field.'

So begins the sixteenth and final chapter of Brian Aldiss's hefty *Trillion Year Spree* written with the collaboration of David Wintrobe. The book is subtitled *The History Of Science Fiction* and it is what it purports to be — which is to say dry rather than a rollicking good read. Historians have an inevitable problem with the events of yesterday — yesteryear is so much more easily pigeon-holed, distance lends perspective — as a result, what we get is 'history' up until the early Seventies, and a wide ranging critique thereafter.

However, the 13 years since an earlier version called *Billion Year Spree* was published has given Aldiss some perspective on the most prolific and famous SF authors of the late Sixties and Seventies — a very fertile period indeed — and that alone may make this book a worthwhile investment for fans of the genre.

In that time, too, Aldiss's own views have altered, so that some of the ground covered in *Billion Year Spree* is now seen in a slightly different light. We start with Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein* and then

move at a fairly ponderous pace through Edgar Allan Poe, H G Wells, Edgar Rice Burroughs and their various contemporaries up to the recognisably recent Thirties and the start of



'real' pulp *scientifiction*. There's plenty of detail here and some fascinating insights into the motives of authors, their relationship with their world and to their material. For instance Aldiss puts forward the theory that Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is possibly a story about the effects of syphilis with the vampire representing the venereal disease and the two women in the story being the disease 'vectors'. Stoker, something of a womaniser we're told, died of syphilis. A convenient myth perhaps, but fun at least, for apart from occasional illumination of this kind *Spree* is a bit heavy going, even for an SF fan.

A few things make me uneasy about the whole. In discussing Stephen King's contribution to SF, for instance, mention is made of *Firestarter*, *The Dead Zone* and *The Shining*, yet there is no reference made to the one novel that is pure SF throughout, *The Stand*. Some turns of phrase break away from the 'serious historian' approach to sound positively noveletish as when Aldiss refers to the USSR as 'that dark Communist alter ego of the capitalist Western world'.

I said 'dry', and perhaps that is the major failing of *Trillion Year Spree*. It's curiously lacking in the excited spark you might reasonably expect from not only an author of many SF novels and short stories but also a self-confessed SF fan. *Trillion Year Spree* seems to want to be a school and college curriculum text and an attempt (slightly defensive in tone) to insist on a rightful place in modern literature for SF alongside more obviously 'serious' works. SF certainly has been, and perhaps still is, regarded as generally low-brow reading despite having among its practitioners some of the great literary names of the past hundred years.

Nevertheless Aldiss, together with David Wintrobe as his helper, seems hell-bent on hammering the point with much philosophising and some extraordinarily 'long' and impenetrable words.

Sadly, more of an effort than a joy to read.

25% ROGER KEAN

ADRIAN EDMONDSON

## How To Be A Complete Bastard

Virgin

£3.95 paperback



SO TV's wacky, wild and fun, fun, fun Adrian Edmondson has brought out his own book, *How To Be A Complete Bastard*, eh?

Television cult programmes have a predictable habit of producing books (*Monty Python*, *The Goodies* and *The Young Ones* spring immediately to mind); the books are usually a bit more risqué than their TV shows, and uncannily appear on the bookstands each year in the pre-Christmas mêlée.

This one's no exception. Unlike *The Young Ones Book*, which incorporated the talents of the regular *Young Ones* writers (Ben Elton, Rik Mayall and Lise Mayer), *How To Be A Complete Bastard* is 'co-writ-

ten' by complete willy ADRIAN EDMONDSON with mark leigh and mike lepine (sic).

The majority of photographs are of Edmondson doing his Vyvian/Sir Adrian Dangerous bit, and not surprisingly the text is primarily concerned with the various pursuits of the right regular bastard.

There are some good moments: an excellent picture of Adrian 'Degrave' Edmondson from *Sick Sick Shitbag* complete with wig and as many pairs of stockings as there are parts of the body to wrap up, and a clever parody of the cover of the *Not The Nine O'Clock News* book, *Not!*, complete with Adrian 'Pamela Stephenson' Edmondson.

Though I had a good laugh on the train (don't read this book if you're easily embarrassed in public), *How To Be A Complete Bastard* is a tad tedious overall, relying too heavily on sub-sixth-form humour which usually revolves around the male crotch (every permutation of the penis euphemism is here).

An over-priced rag-mag. SIMON POULTER



# ALL HE WANTED WAS A FEW LAUGHS.



**When life doesn't seem that great, heroin might seem a great way to have a few laughs.**

**But it isn't long before the fun turns into a bad joke. You'll start looking ill, losing weight and feeling like death.**

**You'll lose control of your mind as well as your health. And eventually you might even risk death.**

**So if a friend offers you heroin, don't treat it as a joke.**

**Otherwise heroin might have the last laugh.**

**HEROIN SCREWS YOU UP**



# BIG DAD

BIG COUNTRY are back on the road this month, and STUART ADAMSON is in a quandary. Performing live in front of the band's loyal and dedicated fans has always been important to him, part of the process of breaking down the barriers between stage and audience. But, as he told DAVID CHEAL, touring also drags Stuart away from his beloved Scotland and his equally beloved family.



**B**IG COUNTRY were shooting the video for their latest single, *Hold The Heart*, in a community arts centre in north London. My appointment with Stuart Adamson was scheduled to come at a convenient break in the filming, at an unspecified time during the course of the afternoon. I couldn't sit in on the shoot because it was in a room with mirrored walls, and hangers-on were excluded — they might creep into the shot.

So I sat downstairs, drank several gallons of coffee and leafed through a fascinating B&I Ferries brochure until Stuart finally appeared clad in a stylish, expensive-looking suit (with cuffs turned up) and a porkpie hat. A tuft of spiky hair bristled out in front of the hat's rim. Stuart lit a cigarette, took his hat off and placed it on the table next to my tape recorder. I half-expected the tuft of hair to remain attached to the hat, but it stayed firmly on his head.

Stuart spoke in a gentle, lilting Scots accent, by no means as incomprehensible as I feared it might be. He's a very thoughtful bloke, a member of that rare species, the intelligent pop star; Stuart avoids the platitudes and clichés which make up the vocabulary of the average music celebrity.

It's been a good year for Big Country: an album, three successful singles, two tours in the UK, the second of which is currently underway. They've also just started to break into the American market, following their successful US tour.

'We have a good live following over there,' says Stuart. 'It's not mega-platinum status but it's good, a lot of people buying records and coming to gigs. Our show over there is pretty much the same as the one over here; we don't do a different stage show because we're in America or Japan or whatever. We tend to get pretty much the same reaction wherever we play.'

Does he find that Big Country attract similar audiences the world over?

'We get a much more varied audience than a lot of people think, a mixture of ages and cultures, and if our audiences are the same the world over they're the same because we get the same sort of mixture of different people.'

Their album *The Seer* is still doing the business, too. Was he pleased with it?

'I was ecstatic. Every aspect of it — musically, lyrically, and live, it's something that's been an absolute joy to work on. There's a lot of space and a lot of atmosphere in the album, and it's brought out a lot of subtleties in the group that were always there but never quite came through before.'

It also brought out a lot of subtleties in Kate Bush, who's featured on one of the tracks. Stuart explains how she came to be involved.

'I've been a big admirer of hers for a long time. We were working on *The Seer* and because the song itself has a woman as a central character we thought it would be nice to have a woman singing it. We've used a girl singer in the past — for some reason it seems to match up quite well with my voice; I don't have a traditional gravelly rock'n'roll voice, it's a bit more straight than that.'

'And because Kate has such a vast range of vocal styles and because of the way she arranges her own stuff vocally, I thought it would be smashing if she could do some work for us. So I called her up, sent her a tape and she really liked the song. We didn't want

to tell her what to do; we just wanted her to be Kate Bush, so she worked out her own arrangement and came in and sang for 12 hours straight. I was quite in awe of her, actually.'

The album's lyrics continue Stuart Adamson's mythical, mystical storytelling style of songwriting.

'It's a lyrical style that interests me a great deal. It's a way I feel I can put not only human situations but moods and emotions and intangible things like spiritual things across, rather than just sitting there saying 'I felt great'. It's trying to create a mental landscape, a mental picture that can re-create the mood or emotion in the listener. On *The Seer*, the idea around which the album revolves is one of learning from the past not to make the same mistakes again in the future.'

'The song itself drew on a story I'd heard about a sort of Scottish Nostradamus who lived in the 12th century. I thought it would be nice to use that with modern ideas. *The Red Fox* was about a guy who was in charge of the English forces in Scotland and was shot by someone, and no-one knew who had done it and it was like an historical act of terrorism. And it was using that idea to show how people's frustrations at their own situations can spill over into violence.'

There are obvious parallels with the 20th century and with unemployment, something about which Stuart has gone on the record with particularly strong views. And it's typical of his attitude that what impresses him is that the frustrations of the unemployed have not spilled over into violence on a large scale, despite the most devastating of circumstances.

**Where I come from, we've got the second highest unemployment rate in Scotland. A fifth of the workforce is out of work. But people still seem to have a sense of humour, and I think that's something that's worth believing in.**

'I was reading Bob Geldof's autobiography, and there's one passage in it where he says that when people are at their worst they're at their best, and I think there's a lot in that. In the area where I come from, we've got the second-highest unemployment rate in Scotland. A fifth of the workforce is out of work. It's farcical, a ridiculous situation. But people still seem to have a sense of humour, and I think that's something that's worth believing in.'

What helps the people back home through this rough period is their strong sense of community, believes Stuart. This concept is a strong thread throughout his work, and growing up in a small community near Dunfermline has taught him the advantages of living your life among people you know and trust.

'I find it very sad that we seem to be developing more and more into a nation that subscribes to the 'I'm all right, Jack' theory. Maybe it's nostalgia, but I did grow up in a close-knit community and I think it's something special, it gives you a sense of purpose



and a sense of belonging, and a sense of being part of something. When they're left to their own devices people tend to turn in on themselves and become suspicious and malicious. It causes a great deal of hostility between people, and causes you to look for people's differences rather than their similarities.'

**" To say that my family is important to me would be an understatement. I'm very important to my family, too, and that's a nice situation to be in, there's a mutual dependency. I think it's important not to teach children how to learn or how to grow up, but to help them, because they do it themselves. "**

Stuart still lives in the town where he was brought up, and seems to be at his happiest there, surrounded by the most important people in his life: his family. Stuart is now the father of two young children, and he takes his responsibilities as a father very seriously.

'To say that my family is important to me would be an understatement. I'm very important to my family, too, and that's a nice situation to be in, there's a mutual dependency. I think it's important not to teach children how to learn or how to grow up, but to help them, because they do it themselves. Also the basic warmth and company within a family is something that's important for kids.'

Stuart once described himself as a 'depressed optimist', but bringing up a family has altered this view: 'Children give you a sense of naïvety, and I mean that in a nice sense, in that kids do see the wonder of things, and can see hope in things, and don't look always at the negatives. I see it in people's faces; I think your basic average human being is a pretty nice person, and I think you have to rely on hope for the human spirit.'

Prolonged absences from his family have altered Stuart's attitude to touring, now ambivalent.

'It's something that's very much a part of me — the actual physical act of playing in a band is something that I derive a great deal of fulfilment from, and it's something I feel very lucky about. I do earn a living out of doing something that I love doing, and not many people can say that.'

'But it does get a bit of a bind sometimes, and I do suffer very severely from homesickness. But we've tempered that this year by doing three or four weeks on and then three weeks off. It's a much more civilised way of doing things, particularly since three out of four members of the band now have families.'

The continued success of Big Country surprises some critics, but not Stuart. He believes that the Big Country success story is largely attributable to the control they've maintained over their lives, their careers, their music, and their integrity, remaining true to themselves rather than adhering to an idea of what might be commercially successful.

'We've been successful by doing what we

want to do and by keeping control of it. I don't think the group would last very long if we started doing stuff that was aimed specifically at a commercial market. We obviously want our stuff to be successful, because I don't see any reason in working in a communicative form and playing to myself, my family and my living-room, but it's important to us to do stuff that we are committed to. You do have a certain amount of clashes and arguments, and we do listen to what other people have to say, but when you do have fixed ideas about whatever it is that you want to do you have to stand by them.'

'It would be a very vainglorious form of success if it all was done on someone else's conception of what the group should be. I'm not interested in success for success's sake — it's too narrow a concept for me to find any great lasting satisfaction from.'

What is success?

'Finding myself deeply committed and deeply satisfied by my work, finding that the responsibilities I have as a father are repaid, and finding that I do what I do without looking too much of a prat, really. That's what it's all about.'

Another important element in the Big Country success story is Stuart's refusal to be sucked into the star system; he prefers to present himself as a pretty regular sort of guy, because that's what he is.

'I'm not really into hero-worship. What I do through my work and through the way I live is something that just goes to make up part of me as a human being, and it doesn't set me apart from other people. I find it disorienting when people do look upon me in that manner. People that are interested in the group come up to us and talk to us and don't feel inhibited, and it could be like that for anybody; I think it's just a matter of how you view yourself. I don't have a stage persona that I can just turn on; Stuart Adamson the songwriter, guitar-player, singer, hus-

band and father is all the same person.'

'People where I live are pretty straightforward and don't make a great deal of fuss about it and just see it as my job. It is a very expressive and emotional form of work, but work it is, it's what I do to make my living. I don't think it's a matter of taking something special and making it everyday, I think it's seeing what there is special in the everyday, I think that's the magic.'

Finally, there's the group itself. Musically, personally, politically, they all clicked from the word go and have gone on without any major conflicts.

'We have something very special between the four of us. I don't know quite what it is, whether it's something in the cut of our trousers or what, there's something there. It's something that's more than the input of each of the individuals. We do play and write with a great deal of spirit. It's something more than just sitting down with a guitar and strumming a few chords. It's a very intangible sort of thing, but it's part and parcel of what goes to make up the group.'

Suddenly it's time to go; Stuart has a photographic session to attend, then the sleeper train back up to Scotland. We talk about the film *Restless Natives* for which he wrote and recorded the score: 'I liked the discipline of writing to illustrate someone else's pictures. I'd like to do more of that,' he says.

He's an ambitious man, but not in the traditional sense of the word. Ask most men what their ambitions are, and they'll talk to you about work, careers; most pop stars would mention unfulfilled yearnings to be novelists, film directors, poets or racing drivers. Stuart Adamson's greatest ambition is more realistic, but given his views on children and families as an expression of hope in the future, perhaps it's more important.

'I'd like to be someone's grandfather. I think that would be a fine thing to be.'



# THE YEAR THAT WAS

As the year draws to a close, LM looks back at important issues, storms in teacups, fads and fashions, muddles and mix-ups, plus the occasional illuminating flashes of brilliance that have emerged during the last twelve months.

## Smack, tattle, pop

RICHARD LOWE rummages through the gutter and looks back on the year according to Fleet Street.

**BRUTAL** rape, bloody murder, drug-ravaged celebrities, horrifying accidents, war, famine, economic recession, political repression — 1986 was just like any other year, really. And when the news is so consistently depressing, it's no real surprise that the popular press relies more than ever on Royal tittle-tattle and spurious 'showbiz' gossip to sugar the pill. However, news that wasn't about Princess Di or Dirty Den did occasionally filter through, and this year it was 'drugs' that took over from AIDS as the new scourge of the nation and the stuff of which tabloid sensations are made.

Phil Lynott died of a drug overdose, the Arab prince **Mashour Ben Saud Aziz** was charged with dealing in cocaine and little **Lord Jamie Blandford** was sent down for three months on a heroin rap. And still it was only January.

While Phil Lynott's death was something of a grim inevitability, the drug problems of **Boy George** came as a genuine shock and gave the popular press more mileage than any other story this year. That he had previously been at pains to distance himself from the school of rock decadence personified by the Phil Lynotts of this world made The Boy's downfall more ironic, and his previous high, and indeed favourable, press profile made the vultures swoop more eagerly.

And the fact that his particular poison was not the fashionable, glamorous cocaine but heroin, dirty and deadly, added extra squalor and degradation to the sorry tale.



Boy George

When the facts of George's heroin addiction were first revealed by photographer **David Levine**, George denied the allegations, claiming that 'the only drugs I have ever taken are things like Valium and sleeping pills'. It was only when his brother revealed the truth to the papers that George was forced to confess. And the misery piled up. George went to court and admitted possession. His friend and musical collaborator, **Michael Rudetski**, was found dead in George's house from the all-too-familiar drug overdose.

And then, to cap it all, George's odious side-kick **Marilyn** tried to sell his tales of Life With Boy George for £10,000. With friends like that to mess up your life, who needs heroin?

The publicity probably did George a world of good, though. He went for treatment, claimed to have 'cleaned up' and won himself a good deal of sympathy. He even got a reassuring telegram from Donny Osmond pointing out that if you take 'in' out of 'heroin' it spells 'hero' (and if you take 'onny' out of 'Donny' and replace it with 'ickhead' it spells 'Dickhead').

The tragic and sensa-

tional drug stories weren't limited to decadent pop stars and desperate peasants. Not every young victim of heroin hogs the headlines for days, but then not every stupid smackhead is the daughter of the Trade And Industry Secretary, and when **Olivia Channon** was found dead in the Oxford rooms of Count **Gottfried von Bismarck** the press had a field day. Olivia had celebrated the completion of her exams with vast quantities of her favourite cocktail, champagne mixed with Guinness, a pint of sherry... and a lethal nightcap of heroin.

It was a tragic case, but also a lesson to the wealthy that giving an immature, irresponsible college student £40,000 a year pocket-money can spoil her in more ways than one.

The world of sport was tainted by drug scandals, too. The snooker player **Kirk Stevens** nearly died in June after an overdose of cocaine, while Ian Botham suffered a fusillade of allegations involving drugs. First to stick the knife in was **Lindy Field**, billed by the press as a 'high society divorcee and former Miss Barbados', who claimed that while on the MCC tour of Barbados Botham had snorted cocaine with her in the bathroom of Mick Jagger's villa, sniffed more cocaine while making love to her on the floor of his hotel room and even broken his bed during one particularly passionate sex session.

Botham even had to cope with a ludicrous accusation that he snorted cocaine while fielding in the slips, and endure the statements of his manager, **Tim Hudson**, who insisted that 'Ian grew up during the drugs generation, so of course he takes drugs... everyone



The Royal kiss

does' before later denying the statement.

Pressure from a Sunday newspaper, which claimed to have evidence of Botham's drug-taking, eventually forced him to admit that he had in the past used cannabis. The ensuing outrage resulted in England's greatest player being banned from first-class cricket for two months by the Test And County Cricket Board.

Even the Royal Family had the odd skirmish with drug-related scandal. An acquaintance of **Princess Margaret** was charged with dealing in cocaine, and **Princess Michael**, with her familiar tact and flair for attracting bad publicity, commented that pop music tended to be 'associated with drugs and exciting things like that'.

On the whole, though, the Royals fulfilled their role, providing the media with a rich fund of cosy, wholesome snippets of news. The royal wedding between (as TV commentator David Dimbleby so neatly put it) 'a second rate royal and an overweight Sloane' attracted the inevitable frenzied hype. The two were well-matched; 'a good team' was the verdict from the horse's mouth.

**Fergie** refused to admit that her figure was a little on the generous side, insisting that 'a good womanly figure' meant 'a trim waist, a good 'up-top' and enough down the bottom but not too big', while her father described **Andrew** as 'a real man'. This was before his stag night, when he destroyed his manly credibility by not taking a single bevvie — I bet he didn't even have a curry on the way home.

In the end the most telling comment on the whole affair came from Fergie's mother, who revealed that the happy couple 'first met on the polo ground — where everybody meets' — a remark which does more to condemn the snobbery

and arrogance of the aristocratic circles in which the Royal Family roam than volumes of Willie Hamilton diatribes.

It was not a good year for the Government, either. Defence Secretary **Michael Heseltine** stormed out of a Cabinet discussion of the Westland helicopter company and resigned from the Government, accusing the Prime Minister of refusing to allow proper discussion of the takeover bid. His resignation was more than an argument over a small firm in Yeovil; it was a rejection of a style of government



Michael Heseltine

where the PM stuffed her cabinet with crawling cronies and ruled the roost, a rejection of policy which puts the interest of shareholders above the interest of the nation. The repercussions of the row also led to Trade And Industry Secretary **Leon Brittan's** resignation from the cabinet.

Junior Health Minister **Edwina Currie** made a name for herself with crass generalisations about the eating habits of the nation. According to Edwina, northerners live on a diet of chips and gravy washed down with pints of bitter, while those sensible sophisticated southerners stay healthy on coleslaw and carrot juice and jogging. With such distorted and prejudiced views she's bound to go far in the Tory party.

Edwina's only real rival in the stupidity stakes was **Jeffrey Archer**, who resigned as deputy chairman

something to be applauded, few could help feeling intense satisfaction with the spectacle of someone as smug and pious as Jeffrey Archer caught with his trousers down. A splendid tale.

But not all news stories were as heart-warming. 1986 was the year when untold (literally) damage was caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, when the space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after take-off; it was the year of the American raid on Libya, the 'state of emergency' in South Africa and the abortive Reagan/Gorbachev 'peace talks'; it was the year of the 'toy boy love massacre' and the 'skinned torso horror', the 'inter-city carnage' and the 'slaughter on flight 075'.

It was a year of routine misery for three million unemployed; Employment Secretary Lord Young reckoned 'the country has never had as good a time as



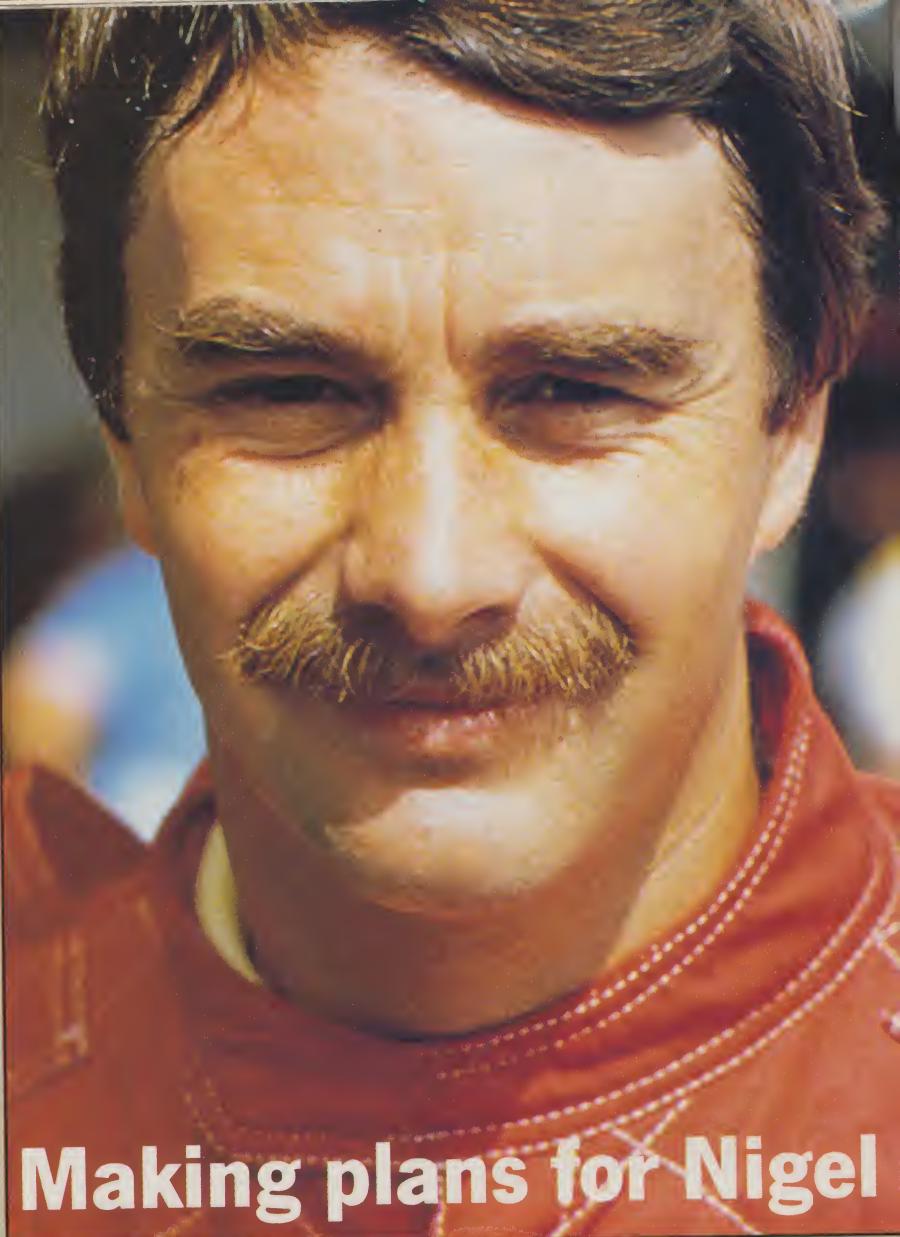
Jeffrey Archer

of the Tory party after he'd admitted paying off a prostitute to avoid any scandalous revelations she might have made about him. Of course Jeffrey never met this woman — he was merely scared that she might reveal more intimate details of their non-existent relationship and so offered her money to go abroad.

While the gutter journalism of *The News Of The World* is not generally

it has today'. It was the year when rape was more rife than ever; in the High Court Mr Justice Garland served a lenient sentence on a man convicted of kidnapping and raping two women because 'the degree of violence used was comparatively small and no sexual perversion was involved'.

These are worrying times. Does anyone imagine next year will be any better?



## Making plans for Nigel

**GUY THOMAS** looks beyond Nigel Mansell's empty Williams — and the smashed hopes of British motorsport for 86 — to make a patriotic Prost Report.

**S**TEVE RIDER managed a brave smile, but he knew his party was a complete disaster. True, it had been well-advertised, and millions of people turned up despite the unsociable hour. But this midnight feast lost its flavour very abruptly.

Nigel, in whose honour the celebration had been planned, was just not in the party spirit after Lady Luck stood him up. Tyred from the start, he later became noticeably deflated and left before the end. Steve's surrogate hero proved less popular with the guests, for he was short, crook-nosed and spoke with a foreign accent — and besides, had got off with Nigel's Lady.

In preaching the gospel

of the next Messiah for 12 frenzied months of crusading, the BBC had nailed together its own cross and carried it cheerfully to the top of the hill. And the myth exploded along with Nigel Mansell's left rear tyre, in an inglorious shower of sparks beamed live from Adelaide. Britain's Big Bang came one day too early.

Perhaps the Beeb got its just deserts, but it's easy to feel sorry for Mansell. He is not the World's best racing driver, but he would have worn that crown had the Gods not let him down. His relief at surviving a 180 mph blow-out without a single physical scar will soon fade, but the mental anguish is his for life. It was his party, he could cry if he wanted to . . .

It's easy to feel sorry for ourselves, too. Historically our drivers have been more successful than any others, and where Stirling Moss failed, six other Britons have succeeded: Mike Hawthorn, Graham Hill, Jim Clark, John Surtees, Jackie Stewart and James Hunt were all World Champions. So the backlash which followed Hunt's 1976 title has been painful. Successive champions have come from five different continents; Frenchmen and Brazilians have been in vogue.

Enter the epitome of the True Grit Brit. The story of Nigel Mansell's transformation from near-failure to national hero is classic *Boys Own* material.

Mansell's career has been more chequered than the finish-line flag, and he's been written off almost as often as his cars. While experts doubted he would ever win a Grand Prix, cynics were busy offering odds on which bend would end his career. And, drop-

ped by the Lotus team, Mansell spun off on the first corner of the first lap of his first race for Williams.

But as soon as he was introduced to victory it became addictive. After no wins in his first 72 races, Mansell achieved six in the next twelve. At once 'Maniac Mansell' became 'Our Nige'. In a touching display of wisdom after the event the critics melted away, or turned their attentions to cricket.

And the man himself changed, maturing. Reckless self-doubt becamereckless self-belief as he defended a surprise championship points lead.

Perhaps this rising tide of personal and public optimism should have been dammed by restraint before being damned by fate. Certainly the veil of anti-climax should not be allowed to disguise the magnitude of Mansell's achievement.

He did not fail. In winning more races than any other driver in 1986, and in forcing the best in the world to treat him as an equal, Mansell proved himself. Luck alone failed him. And the most telling measure of his success was that defeat, in the end, came as a surprise.

The opposition was awesome: three men who were generally considered to be without peer.

Nelson Piquet is the man who persuaded the great Niki Lauda to retire in 1979 by refusing to live in his shadow in the Brabham team. He went on to lift two world titles, become a god, and fail to find a team-mate who could get near him before he joined Williams this year. He won the first race in his native Brazil, was deified again, said it had been easy, and already seemed to be cruising to a third championship.

Ayrton Senna is Brazil's Young Pretender, the Luther of the Piquetist church. He's the Boy Wonder who hit an unprepared Formula One in 1984 with a blend of raw talent and ruthlessness which won him accolades, races and enemies in that order. After knocking Mansell off the track in Rio, Senna fended him off by six feet (after 200 miles) in Spain to stake his claim to Godship.

Alain Prost was the man who persuaded Niki Lauda to re-entre in 1985 by consistently beating him. Formerly nicknamed The Tadpole (because he was a little Frog), he later became

more reverently known as The Professor, the most prolific Grand Prix winner since Jackie Stewart.

Prost was the man who made an artform of coming second in the World Championship points table despite winning most of the races, but it was fourth time lucky last year. Victories at San Marino and Monaco this spring registered his reluctance to relinquish the hard-earned crown, and put him back on top of the standings again.

These recognised stars made Mansell a rank outsider for glory, but he soon brought the odds tumbling. He outraced Senna in Belgium (despite fuel trouble), Prost in France (despite two pit-stops for tyres) and Piquet at Brands Hatch (in an unfamiliar spare car), and romped away unchallenged from them all in Canada and Portugal.

chain — sponsors, designers, engineers and even humble mechanics can have far more influence on a car's results.

Formula One is the technological peak of a technological sport. Much of the drama is written on the test-bed and in the wind-tunnel. At the race-track, the man in the cockpit is merely a prompter as his machine acts out its well-rehearsed role.

Before any team can contemplate winning a Grand Prix, it needs a 1500 cc engine capable of providing 850 bhp: brakes which have instant impact even when they've been red-hot for an hour and a half. The aerodynamics have to allow straight-line speeds of up to 215 mph despite incorporating bulky, inverted wings to increase traction during cornering. And the bodyshell must

Didcot, Oxfordshire; Senna's Lotus in Hethel, Norfolk; Gerhard Berger's Benetton in Witney, Oxfordshire; and Prost's McLaren in Woking, Surrey. This last became the first car in history to achieve three successive World Driver's Championships. And your paper told you this was 'almost a good year for Britain,' did it?

Seven of the fourteen current Formula One teams are British. They are not major manufacturers with corporate funding, but independent, commercially-sponsored, professional racing organisations. They build their own chassis, but they buy their engines.

Between 1957 and 1977 these professionals defeated the challenges of many motor manufacturers who decided to build their own chassis in which to

megabucks bought megahorsepower. Their very survival was threatened.

But the Brits resisted with Mansellian grit. Continuing to build better chassis, they commissioned other manufacturers to provide them with engines. Thus, when the turbo-charger could no longer be defeated, it was they who stole the honours, Brabham in partnership with BMW, McLaren with Porsche and Williams with Honda.

Neither Renault nor Ferrari had produced a turbocharged World Champion. The French conceded defeat last year, leaving professionals such as Lotus to campaign their engines — and leaving the Italian cars to be eclipsed once more by their British rivals.

Rule changes will be bringing Turbo Wars to a



Five wins is usually enough to bag the title. It was certainly enough for the national media to proclaim the seventh coming. The specialist press, however, knew better. The experts knew Mansell could put Britain at the forefront of international motor racing — but they maintained Britain was there already!

Our affection for the individual sporting hero can sometimes distort reality. So while we sat glued to an exciting scrap in which an underdog Bulldog was striving to fend off a lot of foreigners, the fact that all four protagonists drove British cars was largely taken for granted. Or ignored.

The World Driver's Championship may be the big prize for all concerned, but this is, paradoxically but undeniably, a team sport. And British teams have dominated it for 30 years. For them, the driver is merely the final link in the

encompass complex turbocharging and cooling systems and a 50-gallon fuel tank, while keeping weight and air-resistance to a minimum.

Consider, too, that you need a rubber compound which is soft enough to translate all available rpm into mph by literally glueing itself to tarmac at high temperatures, yet hard enough not to wear itself to shreds (or explode) in the process; an onboard engine-management computer which ensures every drop of the regulatory fuel allocation (and no more!) is utilised; and a squad of paramilitary mechanics drilled to change all four wheels in eight seconds.

Any car which does not have all this, along with the mechanical reliability to complete a 200-mile race, will not require the services of a driver.

Only four different chassis won Grands Prix in 1986. Mansell and Piquet's Williams was manufactured in

race their engines. Only the experienced Italian Ferrari concern still had the nerve to try.

Then Renault arrived from France with a revolutionary little engine fitted with a turbocharger — that is, an attachment which uses exhaust gas pressure to force-feed the engine itself with fuel, improving the efficiency of combustion.

Renault spent eight years and a great deal of money developing their baby in a purpose-built chassis. At first the British teams scoffed at it, overtook it frequently, and dubbed it The Mobile Chicane. Within two years they envied it, they were getting beaten by it, and they started calling for it to be banned.

Spotting their opportunity to outgun the professionals, Ferrari and Alfa-Romeo built turbos too. British builders soon found themselves competing against companies whose

close, but they have already been won. The supreme achievement of British motor sport in 1986 has been technical rather than human, and it would have been so even if Steve Rider's party had gone better.

For while the ability of Our Nige — already 32 — to sustain his recent brilliance is uncertain, the continued reliance of his peers on this country's mechanical engineering prowess is now assured — which is why the informed press can keep so cool and complacent in a crisis.

The national media's reportage of the wealthy Ferrari team's bid for Nigel's services seems to be telling us that the balance of power in the sport is changing. It is. It has. But not in the way they claim. Far more telling is the rumour in the specialist media that Ferrari wants to set up a research and development centre in England . . .

# A sporting chance

Was 1986 a great year for British sport? ANDREW SHIELDS reports

'HERE'S the British lad now! He's looking tired, but that's a really great run to get eighth place. . . .'

Words like that used to greet almost every British athlete when dumped into a head-to-head with the rest of Europe. And as our gallant British lad collapsed over the finish line, Ron Pickering would add, '... in this class of competition.'

A strange thing happened in 1986. Our athletes

started winning. Not just Daley, Steve and Seb, but Roger Black, Linford Christie and Fatima Whitbread also strode boldly onto the winner's rostrum where others had fallen at the last hurdle.

And when the 4 x 400 metre relay team struck gold at the European Championships minus one shoe, Britain vaulted to the unparalleled heights of third place in the medals

table.

First and second? The Soviet Union and East Germany, of course. Goes without saying. But don't they just use drugs to win everything? Maybe so, but then so do a lot of other countries, according to the authors of a book called *Foul Play*. They suggested that at least 60 per cent of British athletes use steroids and drugs, a figure which sent a deathly shudder through the jolly hockey sticks organisations which run much of our sport. Two weightlifters even go so far as to make

cross-channel ferry trips to buy a hormone known as the 'dead man's drug' — because it's extracted from corpses. That's a sinister secret which puts a lot of sporting feats into a new light: how many of them were 'natural' or were they all achieved by junkies?

Drugs of a milder sort were, apparently, to blame for England's cricket performances going to pot. The central figure in the story: Ian Botham. Man more sinned against than sinning, or a criminal who should be in jail for admitting smoking dope?

Even though big Both made a *Boy's Own* return to a demoralised England team by taking a wicket with his first ball, the rest

of Gatting's glum gladiators fumbled and bumbled their way to Test defeats by supposedly second-rate nations, India and New Zealand. Which may have convinced 'the gin-soaked doddlers' (quote Ian Botham) in charge of selection that there's something very wrong at the roots of our sporting system — like promising cricketers playing their entire school careers on concrete and tarmac, and never getting even a sniff of grass. That seemed to be all reserved for Botham . . .

Someone once wrote a book about football called *They Used To Play On Grass*. In Mexico, they played on mud baked solid. A far cry from the lush pas-



tures of Wembley, where the bookmakers were so impressed with the plucky 0-0 draw which got the boys in green their plane tickets to South America that they made Northern Ireland rank outsiders for the World Cup and England a ludicrous 8-1. After being humiliated for two-thirds of their qualifying group games, with even the Union Jack brigade sobbing into their tequila, England's miserable month in Mexico was ended by the Godlike hand of Maradona. The boys in green and the Scots, meanwhile, lived down to their reputations.

On the home front, Liverpool did the double and Wolves slumped to the fourth Division, there to join their equally once-famous brothers, Burnley and Preston. At the other end of the ladder of fortune, Wimbleton made it to the top rung while budgeting on the assumption that no-one is going to click through the turnstiles to see them play. Halifax took more money from one Milk Cup tie than from all 42 league matches, while Hartlepool gained the unenviable record of being the first club involved in hooliganism this season. A gang of Cardiff fans decided to pay a visit to the North-East's most spartan of Saturday slums, but had difficulty finding a home fan to fight with.

A ripple of strawberries-and-cream excitement came at Wimbledon as Andrew Castle actually won two matches. While a few months previous and a few miles along the Thames at Twickenham, England's rugby players put their mauling in New Zealand behind them and also won two matches. It wasn't enough to vanquish the French, though, who with garlicky Gallic flair took the Five Nations title ahead of Scotland.

A popular little face during the year was Barry McGuigan. So popular, in fact, that in the few spare moments between kissing babies and opening supermarkets he made a record. Frank Bruno, not to be outdone, dressed in a skirt and recited Shakespeare for Live Aid. Both should have concentrated on their boxing, for their lost fights left egos as dented as their noses. The name now stumbling off the tongue is Lloyd Honeyghan, who sounds more like a hip-hop star than a brawny British bruiser.

Our amateur boxers fared well, though, bringing back a clutch of medals from the Commonwealth Games — which, despite interference from politicians and Robert Maxwell, restored British sport to gritty ground level. The decision of many larger nations to steer clear of Edinburgh, though, left fans slobbering over such tasty morsels as Wales v Papua New Guinea at bowls. All good clean fun at the Friendly Games, it seemed, but behind the scenes there were confrontations over Zola Budd which could shred not only the Commonwealth Games, but the actual Commonwealth.

Away from the scorching pace of international competition, another sporting battle was going on — that of getting more people out of their armchairs and onto our pitches, courts and tracks. *Ever Thought Of Sport?* was the slogan, and it all began with a punk totting a lightbulb on her head and daft songs from Alexei Sayle. The aim was to get sport streetwise, and show people that it's not just about muscles, marathons and money.

All things American took off — like baseball and gridiron — as did the martial arts. And a host of smaller events found a few newcomers keen to give sport a fighting chance.

Away from all the glam of Charlie Nicholas, Nigel Mansell, Fatima Whitbread or David Gower, there are literally dozens of unsung games and players that most people don't know exist. And in many of these sporting cul-de-sacs, out of the glare of *Grandstand* and Tony Gubba, 1986 was a great year for Britain. You might have missed our success in real tennis. Or rowing. Or shooting. Or sailing, squash and equestrianism. Fact is, although Chris Ronaldson may not have got the same amount of coverage when he won the real tennis world title as did Linford Christie when he broke the tape in Athens, he's still the best in the world . . .

Next time you're scanning the sports pages of the paper, don't only look at the gloom and doom headlines, the sick as a parrot manager or over the moon football transfer. Read the small print, the snippets. You'll find plenty of Brits actually winning things down there!

# A good year for the poses

**Designer stubble? DMs? Old school ties? Loose-fitting linen jackets? Which of the year's looks conjured up the feel of 1986 and will make us cringe in ten year's time? JANE BOOTH looks back at the year's high street styles.**

THE phenomenal success of the Levi 501 campaign during 86 proved that old denims never die, they simply fade away.

Button fly jeans were elevated to cult status as the perennial fashion favourite cruised into 86 on the backsides of some very hip cats indeed. Sales (and the temperatures of the female population), rocketed as 501s and Levi jean jackets were teamed with crepe soled bovver boots and collared three button polo shirts for the look of spring 86.

There was a summer in the year somewhere. Its arrival was marked, not with a spell of hot weather, but with a new look to partner the polo shirt: boxy, loose-fitting linen jacket and trousers. It was an easy, relaxed look — done very well by French Connection — and it dominated men's commercial fashion during the year.

Loose fitting linen (à la Don Johnson), gave way to a more tailored silhouette for autumn, but the classic two-pleat trousers, tapering to a turn up, continued to wow 'em all year long.

For those holidaying abroad, trouser lengths rose dramatically. There was no room for bashfulness as the same classic two-pleaters were cropped to just above the knee. Shorts looked good in cotton drill and neutral colours of stone, putty and grey. For more colourful clobber there were vivid Madras checks. No points were scored by saving money and rolling up classic two-pleat trousers for a shorts effect — this did the trousers and the circulation no favours whatsoever.

Sunglasses were a must for those wishing to take the glare off particularly loud Madras checks.

On cooler days knitwear came into its own. Popular cotton knits — the brighter the better — were selling faster than cheap flights to warmer places.

Those with a penchant for a bit of fancy summertime footwork looked no further than the lace-up plimsoll in black or white. The safety conscious opted for the sailing shoe; designed to keep their wearers upright on sea soaked decks, sailing shoes

did a grand job gripping rain lashed pavements. By night, those wishing to trip the light fantastic invested in a pair of taffeta evening slippers.

As a wet summer melted into an equally wet autumn, change was afoot. Plimsolls were ousted by sturdy, leather brogues and whether they were fringed, hole punched, laced or buckled, brogues set the pace for the look of autumn 86 — The English Gentleman.

A look that emerged in the Thirties when the cut of your jib was all-important, the classic country look became the blueprint for the well dressed Englishman and generations of American Ivy Leaguers who adopted it as their own 'preppy' look.

This autumn the look that was originally worn by the Prince Of Wales (no, not Charlie) retained its timeless elegance while gaining an Eighties twist.

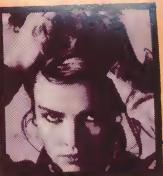
Re-establishing old school ties was the name of the game as crests, badges and all manner of insignia adorned ties and the breast pockets of beautifully cut blazers and sports jackets. Argyll socks and colourful pocket handkerchiefs were all hallmarks of the original Thirties look and accessorised just as well this autumn as they did originally.

Although still available in long sleeved lambswool versions, the ubiquitous polo shirt was replaced in the autumn by a candy stripe shirt that had more of a preppy feel to it. Crisp white cotton (striped with red, blue or green), was the only thing to wear with tailored tweeds and twills, both good old English fabrics, in autumnal shades of cowpat brown and green welly. Double breasted suits in Prince Of Wales check were also popular.

By October, the designers were already looking ahead to 1987 and setting the fashions that will eventually filter down to grace the shelves and rails of the high street shops.

Well, some of them will. The Joseph Tricot collection (with mini-skirted male models putting their best stilettoed foot forward in fetching Dusty Springfield rig-outs), has yet to catch on in Top Man. That kind of outfit would really make a good talking point when the old snapshots of 86 are dusted down and brought out in years to come!





# The year of not living dangerously

**It wasn't a vintage year for pop music, but 1986 did have its moments. RICHARD LOWE drops his beloved Squire albums in horror as he remembers some of the tried and trusted formulas used by different acts to succeed**

WILL Owen Paul be remembered in years to come? Will anyone treasure those halcyon days when mind-blowing acts like Chris De Burgh and Nick Berry whipped the pop-loving public into a frenzy of excitement and shot to the top of the charts?

Probably not, but few will forget **Wham!** In an era when the kings and queens of middle-aged, middle-brow mediocrity (Sting, Dire Straits, Phil Collins, Gabriel, Palmer, Turner, Stewart, Bowie, Queen) are selling compact discs and car cassettes by the million, **Wham!** stood out. They were the spirit of teenage pop music made flesh and blood, living proof that the marriage of trash and panache could be one of splendid perfection.

**Wham!** may have been crass, tacky at times (subtlety was never their trademark) and also clumsily derivative, but they came up with some classic records. Unfortunately their 1986 offering, *The Edge Of Heaven*, wasn't one of them; its 'yeah, yeah' jauntiness sounded a mite contrived, which of course it was.

By now **Wham!** were experienced pop professionals and only pretending to be the teenage tearaways naively whooping it up that they once genuinely were. Clearly it was time to try something new. George's solo single — the 'moody' *A Different Corner* — was much more encouraging, and he seems destined to fill the niche which the critics have been so eager to carve out for him (the 'mature' singer).

songwriter, rather than the shameless purveyor of hack bubble-gum pop).

Andrew, meanwhile, has already slipped comfortably into the role of the Professional Celebrity. He'll end up either blown up high and wide across our cinema screens — he only needs an ounce of talent to complement his swarthy good looks — or blown apart on a race track. They'll be sorely missed.

While **Wham!** bowed out, their fellow giants of Eighties pop bounced back on their fat fannies after a year or two spent swanning around in various tax havens. First to come cap in hand for more pocket money were **Culture Club** with the LP *From Luxury To Heartache* — an apt title in the light of later events. The single *Move Away*, a re-tread of the familiar Culture Club sound, was a moderate success, but the follow-up, the pleasant (if rather mawkish) *God Thank You Woman*, was a flop and probably accelerated George's downfall. It was sad that one of the most witty, colourful and charming characters in pop turned out to be just another bloated, drugged-up 'rock star' — Keith Richard in a kimono — but that's the crazy world of showbiz for you.

**The Human League**, who'd been messing about for around two years re-writing, re-recording and re-mixing their new LP *Crash*, fared somewhat better on their return. Teaming up with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis (the hippest, hottest producers in Christendom) turned out to be an inspired move and

produced *Human*, their best single for years. Shame the rest of the LP was a bit drab.

Poor old **Frankie** had a lot more to do. When your initial success depends so heavily on sensational novelty value coupled with the combined bombastic assault of a dramatic producer and a deranged publicist, when your songwriting talent's notoriously flimsy and when anything less than a string of unstoppable number ones will be seen as a failure, you'll likely as not fall flat on

your face.

**Frankie** resisted the temptation to re-enlist **Trevor Horn** and churn out a few remakes of *Two Tribes*. Instead they opted for a new 'harder' sound, paddling in the shallow end of heavy metal, waving their fists in the air and 'giving it loads'. Paul dressed in leather and looked 'well 'ard', while Holly looked and sounded tamer than before and seemed strangely out of place. *Rage Hard* didn't quite get to number one.

Indeed, 'if in doubt, rock



out' seemed to be the order of the day, and even those militant anti-rockists **Span-dau Ballet** learned that power chords and piercing guitar solos are the easiest musical currencies to convert into dollars. Gary Kemp grew sideburns and became a 'mean axeman' and the LP, *Through The Barricades* contained some choice examples of that old favourite, the Rousing Rock Anthem. Some soul(boy)s are easily bought.

The two closet rockers in **Duran Duran**, John and Andy Taylor, had already acted out their secret desires to be Led Zeppelin in their offshoot 'project', the dreadful Power Station, so when The Barricades finally bothered to make a record they came up with the fashionably funky *Notorious* — a bit clumsy, and Simon Le Bon's still no more of a singer than Nick Berry, but definitely Duran's best effort yet.

With **Wham!** on the wane and Duran idle for so long, the gap in the teenage heart-throb market was filled by **A-Ha**, the most vapid bunch of Vikings ever to invade our shores. With names like Mags and Pal they sounded like a litter of puppies and had pretty much the same cute'n'cuddly appeal. They reached number one with the catchy *Sun Always Shines On TV* but failed to match this success with their subsequent singles, *Train Of Thought*, *Hunting High And Low* and *I've Been Losing You*. Whatever did happen to Kajagoogoo anyway?

**A-Ha** had much in common with fellow newcomers Owen Paul, It Bites, Cutting Crew and Belouis Some and their shop-soiled predecessors Howard Jones and Nik Kershaw (the twin ugly sisters of pop — God knows how they ever became 'pin-ups'). Together they all formed a glut of colourless, anonymous acts successfully peddling bland, characterless contemporary pop targeted at maximum radio play and tailored to suit the lowest common denominator of taste.

Dangerously close to blinding out and blending into this morass of mediocrity were **The Blow Monkeys**, who nevertheless came up with the charming *Digging Your Scene*, and the **Pet Shop Boys**, the most successful new British act of the year who got to number one here and



in the US with *West End Girls*, and maintained a consistent presence in the charts with *Love Comes Quickly*, *Opportunities* and the brilliant *Suburbia*. Not bad for an over-age ex-music journalist who can't sing for toffee.

With all these tame, tasteful 'artists' around, **Sigue Sigue Sputnik** were something of a welcome antidote. It sounded great on paper — bring glamour, fun and excitement back into music, roasting raw rock'n'roll in the white heat of technology, 'designer violence', 'Buy EMI', 'Fleece The World' etc.

Unfortunately *Sputnik* stumbled at the first fence by making utterly dreary music; their records all sounded the same — a cross between a Sweet B-side and a dodgy Giorgio Moroder soundtrack. Still, it was fun while it lasted, and great to see the media get all flustered and outraged about the great *Sputnik* 'hype'.

Fact one: nothing can be 'hyped' without the full co-operation of the media; they decide who goes on the cover. Fact two: contrary to the arrogant assumption of the media, records do not get into the charts because the papers go on about them. They get into the charts when little Joe and Joanne Public hear them on the radio, like them and buy them. They liked *Love Missile F-11*, but could do without the follow-up because it sounded exactly the same.

Unfortunately it is possible to hype a film, and the poor punters had to fork out their money and discover for themselves that *Absolute Beginners* was crap. Still, it gave **David Bowie** enough exposure to ensure a number one hit for his grandiose theme tune.

Indeed, it seems that most of the records in the chart either had the grim 'from the soundtrack of...' warning stamped on the sleeve or were dodgy TV spin-offs. *Eastenders* was the worst culprit. First we had Anita Dobson's nauseatingly sloppy version of the theme tune, and then Nick Berry, with a voice more feeble than a *Crossroads* plot, shot to the top of the charts with his ode to the jilted *Lofty, Every Loser Wins*.

*Lofty* himself, in his real-life guise of Tom Watt, harboured musical ambitions and released a version of Bob Dylan's *Subterranean*

*Homesick Blues*, Pete Beale tried to cash in on two fronts with *Can't Get A Ticket For The World Cup* and wished he'd stuck to fruit and veg, and Sharon and Kelvin's group *The Banned* came up with *Something Outa Nothing* (well, at least they changed their name from 'Dog Market').

The man responsible for much of this tosh was Simon May, who wrote the *Eastenders* theme tune, Nick Berry's outrage and *The Banned*'s single and also scored a hit with the theme from *Howard's Way*, the drippy *Always There* by Marti Webb. Hang him high.

Even those zany 'alternative' comedians were at it. **The Young Ones** persuaded Cliff Richard to join them as they knocked the stuffing out of his old hit *Living Doll*, and donated all the proceeds from the chart-topping hit to charity, while the Spitting Image team pocketed the ill-gotten gains from their monstrous smash *The Chicken Song*.

Best of the TV spin-offs was Claire and Friends' *'Orrible Being In Love When You're Eight And A Half*, the deserving winner of *Saturday Superstore*'s hugely entertaining Search For A Superstar competition. Let's hope she doesn't grow up to be as irritating as Sam Fox, the pea-brained Page-Three girl who astonishingly scored two top ten hits with her appalling 'erotic'-disco-for-monic-Sun-readers.

If it wasn't a TV spin-off, every other record seemed to be either an oldie or a cover version. Sam Cooke's *Wonderful World* and Marvin Gaye's *Heard It Through The Grapevine* both enjoyed a fresh romp through the charts on the back of the Levi's 501 adverts, Lulu re-recorded *Shout!* and made an unexpected return to the top ten, while three of the Real Thing's hits from ten years ago (*Can't Get By Without You, You To Me Are Everything* and *Can You Feel The Force?*) resurfaced in the charts for no specific reason other than outstanding merit.

A cover version of an old favourite is always a cheap, safe way for an act lacking in imagination and a decent song of their own to revive a sagging career. The device was put to widespread use this year. **The Fine Young Cannibals** revived *Suspicious Minds*

and succeeded where their own material had failed, and were followed into the charts by London label-mates **The Communards** and **Bananarama**, who had massive hits with uninspired versions of *Don't Leave Me This Way* and *Venus*.

Others, too, latched onto this wheeze. **Kim Wilde** made a worthless comeback with *You Keep Me Hanging On, Dr And The Medics* shot to number one with the dreary *Spirit In The Sky* and even **The Damned** were at it, the 'lovable louts' enjoying their biggest hit ever with the epic *Eloise*.

The worst offenders were **Amazulu**, who somehow managed to squeeze every ounce of zest out of the Chi-Lites' *Too Good To Be Forgotten*, then followed it up with the stunningly dull *Montego Bay*. I suppose they've got a living to make but it's not what I call an honest bob.

As ever it was the consistently strong soul scene that spawned many of the year's most memorable records. The Jam-Lewis production team moulded solid hits for **Alexander O'Neal** and **Cherelle** and,

**Boys**. He also penned the sublime *Manic Monday* for **The Bangles**.

**Whitney Houston** followed up last year's *Saving All My Love For You* with the catchy *How Will I Know* and the anthemic *Greatest Love Of All*, and **Cameo** finally got the top ten hit they've deserved for years with *Word Up*.

Hip-hop and electro also made significant inroads into the charts this year. **Run DMC** almost made heavy metal fashionable by adding their beatbox bits to *Aerosmith's Walk This Way*, while **The Real Roxanne** combined a wicked rap with that irresistible go-go beat on the storming (*Bang Zoom Let's Go Go*).

Nor were British black artists completely in the shadows, although it was the poppier end of the range that enjoyed the most success. **Billy Ocean** had a deserved number one with the unstoppable *When The Going Gets Tough*, and **Five Star** established themselves as the most consistent hit-makers of the year. Having milked their first LP *Luxury Of Life* dry after *System Addict*, they came up with

release of her best ever single *Borderline*, a surprising flop when it was first released in 1984, and followed that up with three new singles of equal quality — *Live To Tell, Papa Don't Preach* and *True Blue*. Shame about the film though.



Finally, let's not forget the lovable flat-top and anorak brigade that make up the much-maligned 'indie scene', more vibrant than ever this year and a lot more interesting than mainstream pop. **The Smiths** dominated the indie charts with the excellent *Queen Is Dead* LP — big fish in a small pond perhaps, but they also had respectable chart hits with *Big Mouth Strikes Again, Panic and Ask*.

**The Housemartins** managed to break out of the indie ghetto with their perky-but-profound brand of pop, and even if their rather twee and patronising normal-lads-from-Hull image did grate a bit, they made a refreshing change from the standard pop fare.

Not so lucky, but just as deserving were **The Shop Assistants**, **The Soup Dragons**, **The Mighty Lemon Drops** and **The Wooden-tops**; I'm sure their time will come. **The Jesus And Mary Chain** finally toned down the feedback on *Just Like Honey*, which slipped into the charts behind Radio 1's back, while the quaintly titled *We've Got A Fuzzbox And We're Gonna Use It* almost had a hit despite the gleeful misuse of said instrument on their *XX Sex* EP.

Best of the bunch, though, were **Half Man Half Biscuit**, whose bitter rants about obscure TV personalities were hilarious. It's a formula that'll no doubt get more tiresome than Jimmy Tarbuck but it's fun while it lasts. Any-one with a song called *All I Want For Christmas Is A Dukla Prague Away Kit* deserves to have their own TV show. How could anyone prefer Owen Paul?



more notably, **Janet Jackson**, who put together a string of hits with *What Have You Done For Me Lately, Nasty* and *When I Think Of You*.

The veteran 'Godfather Of Soul' **James Brown** wooed a whole new generation with *Living In America* and *Gravity*, while **Prince** consolidated his critical reputation with his shows at Wembley and the singles *Kiss and Girls And*

an equally strong follow-up — *Silk And Steel* — a fresh collection of inoffensive and annoyingly catchy pop songs, ideal for the radio or the disco. So far the LP has spawned *Can't Wait Another Minute* and *Rain Or Shine*.

Right now only **Madonna** can match them for consistency, and not surprisingly it was another bumper year for her. She opened this year's account with the re-

1986

# Absolute beginnings

**CURTIS HUTCHINSON** slips into the upper circle — and why not? — to look back at a cinematic year of blood, action, discomfort and a new Aussie superstar.

THE lights go down. The music crackles over the sound system, the guy behind is discussing the intricacies of his souped-up Cortina, the girl in front has decided to swap places with her beefcake boyfriend, the nerd alongside opens his first packet of crisps; scratchy adverts for the local curry house, Sixties fashions and Kia-Ora flash onto the screen followed by a trailer for the latest Stallone nasty, then a heartfelt plea from rent-a-celebrity for the charity of the week.

The lights go up. The collection tin is passed round. Everyone dips begrudgingly into their pockets for the loose change they were saving for the bus trip home. Punters who just 20 minutes ago were braving the elements in a slow-moving queue now decide they need a Choc Ice. The lights go down again, the first latecomers make themselves known, and the whole sorry show gets under way.

There's no getting away from it: the best place to

see a film is on a big screen in a cinema equipped with 70mm and Dolby stereo facilities. The problem is that British cinemas are, by and large, cold, dirty and uncomfortable, not the sort of places where you'd while away a couple of hours in the hope of being entertained. Small wonder that attendance is plummeting as video rentals soar.

This could all change as a result of the successful opening earlier this year of Britain's first ten-screen cinema complex in Milton Keynes. Multiplexes have been popular in Europe and America for some time, basically because they provide an ideal environment for movie-watching: comfy chairs, steep rakes, good sound and first-rate projection. What's more, you can have a drink afterwards,

buy a book or eat a meal.

Salivating entrepreneurs have watched the progress of Milton Keynes with interest and put in bids to build multiplexes all over the country. The first of these opens in Salford this month with Slough and High Wycombe following next year.

Well, there's the good news, something in short supply in 86 — especially around the palatial West End offices of Goldcrest, the pioneering British film company behind such gems as *Gandhi*, *Dance With A Stranger* and *A Room With A View*. With three biggies poised for release, 1986 was going to be Goldcrest's year.

It wasn't. The misconceived *Revolution* kicked up a ferocious critical storm both sides of the Atlantic and didn't stay around long enough to be seen. Okay, it was a 'quality' movie aimed, rather vaguely, at a post-teen audience. Gold-



crest blew it, but they couldn't go wrong with their next one, could they? *Absolute Beginners* was a musical set in Soho during the late Fifties, with a soundtrack by the likes of The Style Council, Sade and David Bowie. Sure, it was a lively movie, directed with great gusto by **Julien Temple** (definitely a man to watch); the problem was that the kids hated it.

The hopes of Goldcrest now rest upon *The Mission*, and personally I can't see how a film about Jesuits and Indians getting it together two hundred years ago in the Colombian jungle could fail. Sounds

like a winner . . .

As does **David Puttnam**'s appointment as the top studio executive at Columbia Pictures. Puttnam, the first Brit ever to hold such a senior position, has already indicated that he's keen to get started on a sequel to *Ghostbusters* and that he'll be sending plenty of work to British studios.

Back home, the Cannon Films buy-out of Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment brought forth a lot of racist nonsense from people within the industry, but the new owners are hardly asset-stripers. **Menahem Golan** and **Yoram Globus** have already shown their commitment to shooting movies over here, starting with *Superman IV*, and ambitiously plan to drag their newly acquired ABC circuit into the Eighties.

Like the bloodthirsty Romans who flocked to watch gladiators beat the shit out of each other, cinema audiences in 86 opted for action, ketchup and more action. Hence the success of **Arnold Schwarzenegger**'s tongue-in-cheek (though ridiculously violent) *Commando* and the brilliantly-shot *Top Gun* (an airborne remake of *An Officer And A Gentleman*, which in turn was a remake of something else). The man who emerged with the most blood on his hands was, predictably enough, **Sylvester Stallone** in both *Rocky IV* and *Cobra*.

#### The Mission



With all this death and destruction on tap it was rather pleasing that more worthy movies like *The Color Purple*, *Hannah And Her Sisters* and *Mona Lisa* found an audience.

Sequelitis continued to rage unabated from the downright awfulness of *Police Academy III* to the mediocrity of *The Jewel Of The Nile* and the sheer bravado of *Aliens*. Other also-rans included *Polytergeist II*, *Karate Kid II*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street II*, *The Return Of The Living Dead* and *Psycho III*. Movies are sounding more and more like football scores these days.

Closer to home, **Roger Moore**'s protestations that he had too made his last 007 movie were finally taken seriously and we have a new James Bond in the distinguished stage (though undistinguished film) actor **Timothy Dalton**, who's currently shooting the twenty-fifth-anniversary Bond movie, *The Living Daylights*.

Pop stars making prats of themselves included **Sid** in *Sid And Nancy*, **Prince** in *Under The Cherry Moon*, **Bowie** in *Labyrinth* and **Madonna** in *Shanghai Surprise*. Film stars making prats of themselves included **Al Pacino** in *Revolution*, **Louis Gossett Jr** in *Enemy Mine*, **Sean Connery** and **Christopher Lambert** in *Highlander*, **Michael Caine** in anything and **Barry Norman** in *Spitting Image*, and why not . . . ?

New stars? Well, there's **Kim Basinger** who made a lasting impression in the upmarket skinflick *9½ Weeks*; there were also the interchangeable pretty boy pin-ups **Rob Lowe** and **Tom Cruise**, but the surprise new superstar has to be **Paul Hogan**, whose *Crocodile Dundee* has become Australia's biggest export since, well, *Fosters* . . .



# Into the Bright age

**NICK STEPHENS** rewinds and casts a flickering eye over the cleaner face of video during 1986

VIDEO nasties, cowboy video dealers and the dirty mac brigade have all contributed to the tardy image that video has managed to acquire in its short but hectic career.

Thankfully a clean-up campaign is under way and we're beginning to see some results. The British Videogram Association (BVA) and the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT—a close relative to the computer software industry's FAST) have been making great strides to improve the industry, while the Graham Bright bill (pas-

sed by The House Of Commons earlier this year), went a long way towards improving video's image.

The Bright bill—which came into effect on 1 September—stipulates that every video available for rental must have a BBFC (British Board of Film Censors) certificate.

It may have improved the industry image, but the bill was a nightmare for local video dealers. It's been estimated that due to the bill the average video dealer lost roughly £2,500 worth of stock, and had to

spend countless painstaking hours sifting through the racks of cassettes, putting little sticky labels here, there and everywhere.

The problem was that because videos released before 1 September didn't have to be certificated, many weren't. And as some of the companies who released them have since gone under, there's no one around to pay for their certification (an expensive procedure since the BBFC is not cheap)!

Also, some of the uncertificated movies from the big companies were so old it was decided that it was pointless to push them through the rigorous BBFC assault course because they were no longer selling. Thus many local hire-shops offered a bargain bin of ex-rental cassettes for £5 each.

Budget films also rocked the rental outlets. At the end of last year, entrepreneur **Steve Ayres** got his **Video Collection** off the ground. Ayres bought up the rights to a couple of hundred films that were, like his videos, going cheap, and in a few short months he'd had them duplicated into VHS, packaged, shelved up in Woolies and selling for the (then) revolutionary price of just £6.99 a piece. They sold in their thousands.

£6.99 a piece. They sold in their thousands.

Since that time, **Channel 5, Video Masterpieces, Warner Home Video, RCA/Columbia** and several smaller companies have climbed aboard the cheapo charabanc. The year saw films like *Eraserhead*, *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*, *Christiane F. Dirty Harry* and several *Thunderbirds* movies all on sale for under-a-tener.

On the hardware side, 8mm video has continued to grow (but still hasn't blossomed), while Ferguson and Hitachi have introduced VTRs with built-in timers programmed to record from the infra-red remote control handset. And VHS-C cam-corders (video cameras into which you put a small VHS cassette) have been selling like hot cakes.

As 86 rolls to a close, it looks as though the great format war is over. JVC's VHS format has finally emerged as the triumphant victor, while Sony's Betamax (ironically a much better format), has come out of it all bruised and bloody.

Terrific.

**QUASI-CLASSICAL** music, a murky alley, people running down fire-escapes, a jukebox, steam, smoke, coloured lights, flashing neon... and that was just the opening titles.

*The Tube* was back with a new look, a new feel and an adjusted format, but you could have fooled me.

There was the muttering, spluttering Holland, the hearty, tarty Yates and the new dullard Wendy May. It was all of it much of a muchness and much of it much the same. Like the whole of the year's output for the under-30s, *The Tube* was another series in a series, another re-run, another best-of, another repeat showing, another hacked-up, jacked-up pile of toss.

Channel Four ran out of ideas in 86: *Saturday Live* had an end-of-year comeback, but only after an unnecessary and tedious repeat of the first series. Hardly a riveting programme at the best of times, the show relied heavily on third-rate alternative performers, dodgy, stodgy, podgy Yank comedians and Ben Elton's 'rad' satire. Not a convincing recipe for success.

*The Tube* replacements — *Solid Soul, Revid* and *The Chart Show* — were pretty damn dull too. *Solid Soul* specialised in poor presentation, appalling miming, and archive clips with sycophantic and moronic audiences gyrating seductively in front of the camera. Terrific.

*Revid* was even worse (cocky, chirpy Crowley and a nerd of a baboon babbling inanely about recent vids), but fortunately *The Chart Show* had a few saving graces. By using fast forward/rewind techniques and avoiding human presenters, it injected new pace into the sterile medium of pop TV, presenting a diverse mixture of indie, HM, soul, and chart videos with the emphasis firmly placed on the music and its performers.

Channel 4 had already pioneered alternative pop presentation with *The Max Headroom Show*. A second series of the stuttering schizoid failed to materialise in 86 (he was probably too busy doing Radio Rentals commercials and Coca Cola ads in the States), although the show is due to return in February 87. Wonderful...

Without strong competition from Channel 4, it's no wonder that the Beeb and ITV continue to churn out

# Nothing on the

Ranting **PAUL STRANGE** examines the youth TV predicament during 86, while **ROD POWELL** looks at possible future developments



drivel for the youth market. Saturday morning TV remains a slimy heap of dung: *Saturday Superstore* is identical to the last series (it might just have been repeated, no-one would know the difference), while ITV's *Get Fresh* is decidedly stale even though presenter Gaz Top puts in a sterling performance.

*Top Of The Pops* continues to spew out excrement every Thursday night. Despite the cretinous deejays, mediocre music, and abysmal mim-

ing by preening dullards, 7,000,000 viewers still tune into it every week. Incredibly.

And then there's *Whistle Test*, a show that persists with middle-aged presenters and dead-beat Seventies idols. The addition of Andy Kershaw and Ro Newton has given the programme a much needed kick up the bum, but the Beeb should consider a total and utter re-vamp, or drop the bugger totally.

While they're at it, perhaps they could also give *No Limits* the heave-ho. Limp, insipid, wet, and a bloody good excuse to nip out for a beer, *No Limits* is without doubt the worst TV programme ever created — apart from 3,2,1, *That's My Dog* and *The Late Late Breakfast Show*. Ghastly, amateurish and just plain naff, *No Limits* is a giant uncontrollable vehicle for Jonathan King's increasing ego. We don't need it, and we certainly don't need him. ■

The experiment has achieved decent viewing figures, and other ITV regions are likely to follow suit. Aimed at the young adult, Music Box is pure pop pap, but at least it's the start of something better. London Weekend Television, for example, is planning *Night Owl* (an 'upmarket style magazine' programme) that will run until 4 am.

In fact, round-the-clock television could soon be upon us. The BBC launched its daytime schedule a couple of months ago, but true to form they totally ignored the youth market. Other than the *Clothes Show*, there's nothing of interest unless you're retired (physically or mentally), and yet there are thousands on the dole who could benefit from sensible daytime youth programming.

There's more to come: Superchannel will be launched next year. A combined effort between the BBC, ITV and Richard (not again) Branson, it'll be beamed via a satellite at Europe. Unfortunately Superchannel won't offer much that's new, particularly if you're already receiving Music Box via a local cable station.

Cable has been regularly panned by British critics. Often described as 'too late' and 'too expensive', the criticisms are a trifle unfair. Recently — at Westminster Cable's first birthday party — it was apparent that the 15 or so cable channels offer a far wider choice than any of us could have imagined, and it's an area that's bound to increase.

Earlier this year ITV released some research figures which revealed that 17-20-year-olds believe TV has a greater impact than any other media form. The figures were based around exposure to (and recall of) commercials. With the repeat showings that some of this year's better examples of television advertising have had — Levi's jeans, Griff Rhys Jones/Holstein Pils, Elton John/Cadbury's, Tina Turner/Pepsi Cola — it's hardly surprising (to coin an old cliché), that the commercials have more impact than the programmes they separate.

There's still no youth channel, no daytime slot for young adults, and no national all-night television orientated towards the under-30s, but a few vital steps were taken this year.

**IN WHAT** has definitely been a bad year for youth programmes, it was encouraging to see a few developments which gave a glimmer of hope for the future.

Richard Branson got his feet firmly under the broadcasting table as Music Box (the Virgin-owned pop video cable channel) became a sole source of programme material for all-night-telly in Yorkshire.

Strap me across a can-  
non's mouth and blow my  
vitals to the four winds if I  
lie! Give me a taste of the  
cat if I exaggerate!

New Year's Eves are get-  
ting better every year. I  
should know. I've been at  
the last 140 of the buggers.

I thought I'd seen it all,  
but this year's little shindig  
was wilder than the cur-  
rents off Santa Cruz and  
noisier than the Battle Of  
Copenhagen. I'll eat my hat  
if I'm wrong.

It was Bedlam. It beg-  
gar'd description beyond  
that. You could hardly draw  
a cutlass because the  
crowds were so big.

There were thousands  
upon thousands of them.  
From all over the world they  
came, like rats to a corn-bin,  
to run up the Jolly Roger,  
quaff the rum barrel and, in  
true nautical fashion, booz-  
ily bid God-speed to the  
year of our Lord 1986.

Lumme, how time flies!  
It seems only yesterday  
that I was lying in the arms  
of my loyal friend and most  
trusted non-venereal sub-  
ordinate Mr Hardy on the  
deck of my beloved flag-  
ship and uttering those  
famous departing words,  
'This is another fine mess  
you have gotten me into'.

The untameable spirits of  
youth know no brake. What  
a time they had carousing  
into the early hours of the  
new year. What a debauch!  
Some must have awoken  
the following morning feel-  
ing as if their bowels were  
spring-loaded. What a  
night!

Of course I'm used to  
staying up quite late every  
night so the crowds didn't  
disturb me too much. It only  
happens once a year, so I  
suppose they are entitled  
to kick up a bit of a din and  
let their hair down.

Naturally I would have  
loved to have joined in all  
the fun and games, but  
that's the way it goes. As a  
180 ton granite statue you  
have to accept your limita-  
tions. It's easy to make a  
dick of yourself.

I like to keep myself to  
myself. Some people might

# NELSON'S COLUMN

As seen through the eye  
of KEVIN PILLEY

## BEDAD!

Strap me across a can-  
non's mouth and blow my  
vitals to the four winds if I  
lie! Give me a taste of the  
cat if I exaggerate!

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ting better every year. I  
should know. I've been at  
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that's the way it goes. As a  
180 ton granite statue you  
have to accept your limita-  
tions. It's easy to make a  
dick of yourself.

I like to keep myself to  
myself. Some people might

amusements on New  
Year's Eve is to catch up on  
the latest dance sensations  
sweeping the country.  
Recently we've had the  
Chouf Mountain Quickstep,  
the Howzdeh Marshes  
Mustard Gas Boogie, the  
Chernobyl Charleston and  
the Restricted Waters Jitterbug  
in which everyone  
pretends they are frogmen  
being depth-charged by  
the Swedes.

Last, but not least,  
there's the SDP wardance.  
It's called *The Fizzle* and is  
popular among large numbers  
of primitive people.

I am only joshing.  
Everyone enjoyed them-  
selves this year. That's all  
that matters. All except  
those clods in front of the  
South African Embassy  
over the way. What a miser-  
able bunch of Boers! A 24-  
hour vigil they call it.  
Haven't they got anything  
better to do? Zola what's it  
summed it up when they  
asked her if she missed  
people back home. She said  
she didn't because she's  
got a steady hand and a  
good gun.

I don't go in much for poli-  
tics. I try to rise above it. Yet  
it grieves me exceedingly  
that the world is still run by  
this Reagan object. Brains  
of a musketball.

And this palsy-walsy  
Comment allez-vous with  
the Frogs so we can build  
an undersea tunnel bet-  
ween the two countries is a  
kick in the plinth for people  
like me who fought for King  
and country, keeping them  
and their bloody smelly  
snails at bay. If it had not  
been for some stunning  
acts of intrepid bravery on  
the behalf of the Royal Navy  
(God bless her closing  
docks), Napoleon would be  
at the helm of this nation  
today. On second thoughts,  
perhaps she is.

As years go, 1986 wasn't  
that bad actually. I lost a bit  
more hair and my cheeks  
grew a little more sunken,  
but that's wind erosion for  
you. You are asking for it  
150 foot above Trafalgar  
Square.

I'm looking forward to  
lots of things in 87: jobs,  
cheaper housing, a Health  
Service that works, unilat-  
eral disarmament, 20 years  
on since Sgt Pepper and  
that new youth magazine  
with the funny cover. Yes,  
it's going to be a good one.

If not, I suppose I'll just  
have to turn a blind eye.



accuse me of being a bit  
aloof and stuck up and I  
know quite a few people  
think I am just a big poseur,  
but if you were in my position  
who wouldnt be?

There's nothing wrong  
with posing anyway. The  
birds love it. As a well-  
known and terrifically  
handsome London land-  
mark you've got to get used  
to having birds crawling all  
over you. I can't help it. I  
stand out in a crowd. It's  
called presence. You've  
either got it or you haven't.

The Prince Consort  
Albert, down at Kensington  
Gore, has got it. Did you  
know that Queen Victoria  
commissioned the statue  
just to see what Albert  
would have looked like if he  
had been Jamaican?

As a keen student of  
human nature and current  
affairs, one of my favourite

LM

**What does Christmas mean to you? Do you care? Well RICHARD LOWE does, and here he examines the real meaning of Christmas.**

# Festive sneer

**FORGET** all you've been told: Father Christmas really does exist, and he's a much more sinister and mysterious figure than legend has fooled us into believing.

For a start, he chooses to bestow his plentiful bounty not on those angelic, deserving children who are obedient and well-behaved all year and who go to bed especially early on Christmas Eve so mummy and daddy can get on with that wrapping they've been putting off for three weeks and bugger off to the pub while there's still room to breathe and time to get legless.

No, his beneficiaries are less deserving but nevertheless grateful: department-stores, publicans, restaurateurs, off-licences, nightclubs, toy manufacturers, brewers, distillers, tree-rustlers, jewellers, purveyors of hangover cures and indigestion tablets, card manufacturers, record companies, book publishers, television companies, Slade, wrapping-paper and gift-tag makers, the Post Office, Fisher Price, Palitoy and the rest of that evil syndicate, the VAT men, butchers, bakers and probably even candlestick makers, British

Rail, the fella who invented Trivial Pursuit, taxi drivers, postmen, dustbinmen, pop stars, priests, perfumiers, pudding makers, and, last but not least, the manufacturers, distributors and retailers of handkerchiefs (particularly those who trade in sets of three), ties, gloves and socks.

Father Christmas is not a kind old man with a white beard, a fur-trimmed red coat, a sledge, a sack, a crack team of elves and reindeers and a knack for shinning down chimneys that have been blocked up since the Blitz. All that was a fib.

In fact, Father Christmas is the code-name (coined by a team of top psychologists who've been looking into the phenomenon) for a sudden bout of inexplicable 'madness that grips us all every year toward the end of December.

The Father Christmas syndrome can be more specifically defined as 'a sudden malfunction of the normal restraints and inhibitions that govern our behaviour', and the symptoms are familiar to us all.

Pillars of sobriety down enough sweet sherry and port and lemon to guarantee cirrhosis, the thirstiest

of misers spend money as if they've been told that any left over on 2 January will be confiscated by the Treasury; boiling passion and fiery lust surface in the most timid and frigid of creatures and suddenly the meanest, most miserable, unfriendly bastards turn into models of cheer, goodwill and generosity.

The Father Christmas syndrome explains why we all start decorating our houses and High Streets with coloured lights and gaily-festooned fir trees, why we buy unwanted presents for our friends and family, why we feel a sudden urge to be reunited with distant relatives, why we give money to charities and people who come and sing on our front doorsteps, before launching ourselves wholeheartedly into an orgy of alcohol and rich food and then suffering cold turkey until the next fix of decadence at New Year.

The Christmas caper has its roots, of course, in a religious feast, and many still cling forlornly to the notion that what we are all celebrating is the birth of

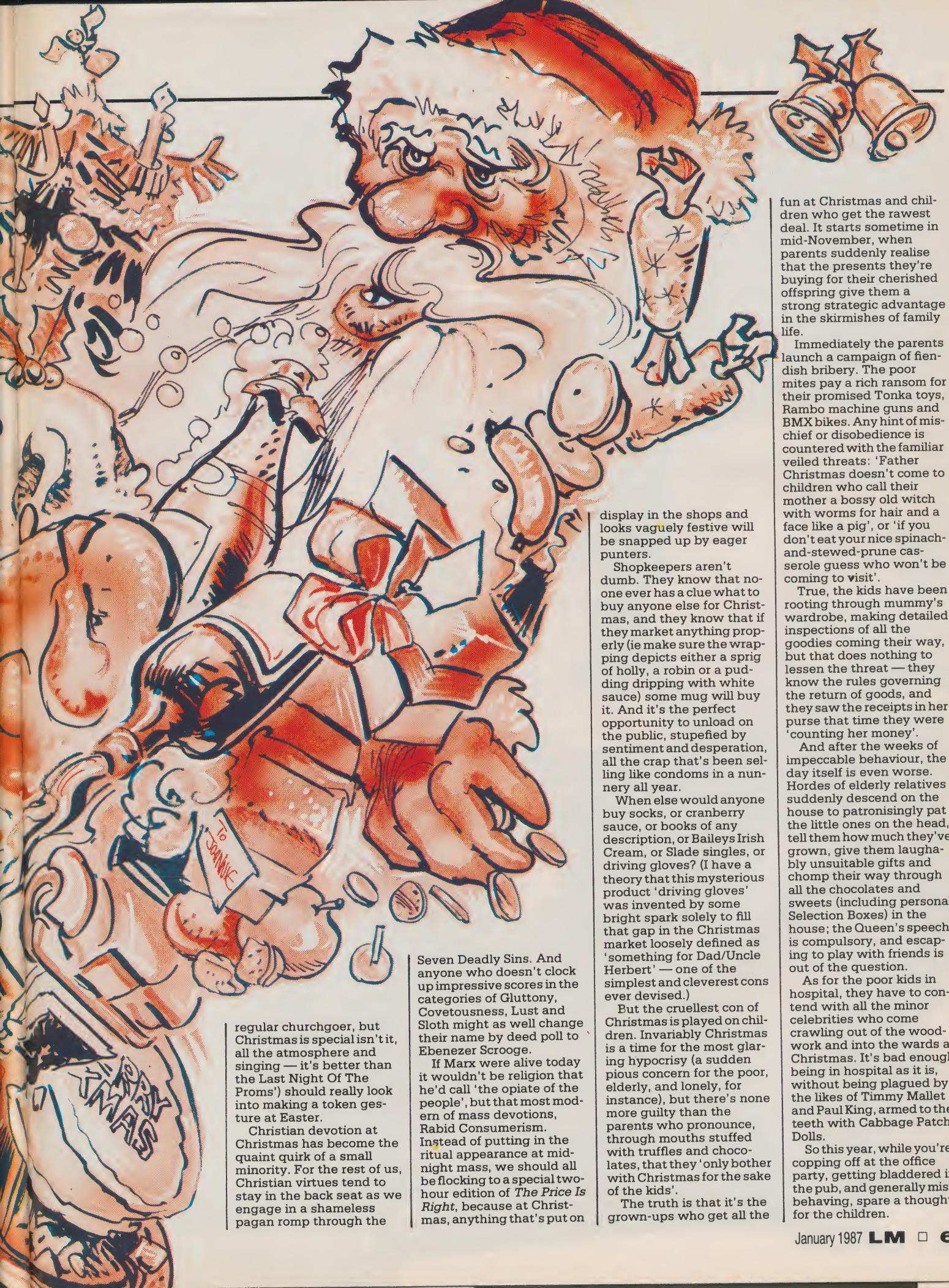
Jesus Christ. But the 'Put Christ Back Into Xmas' campaigners have more on their hands than persuading the great British public to spell a word of more than five letters correctly.

For, despite our vociferous protestations to the contrary, Britain is no longer a Christian country, and while a majority may pay lip-service to the Church Of England, only 15 per cent of the British people are practising Christians.

If Christmas were just a religious feast, it would be a tiny minority festival by now, meriting a small item on *News At Ten* and perhaps a special bumper edition of *Songs Of Praise*.

It isn't even the most important date in the Christian calendar; the resurrection of Christ is far more fundamental to the faith than His birth. Those who make their annual appearance at church on Christmas day ('I know I'm not a





regular churchgoer, but Christmas is special isn't it, all the atmosphere and singing — it's better than the *Last Night Of The Proms*! should really look into making a token gesture at Easter.

Christian devotion at Christmas has become the quaint quirk of a small minority. For the rest of us, Christian virtues tend to stay in the back seat as we engage in a shameless pagan romp through the

Seven Deadly Sins. And anyone who doesn't clock up impressive scores in the categories of Gluttony, Covetousness, Lust and Sloth might as well change their name by deed poll to Ebenezer Scrooge.

If Marx were alive today it wouldn't be religion that he'd call 'the opiate of the people', but that most modern of mass devotions, Rabid Consumerism. Instead of putting in the ritual appearance at midnight mass, we should all be flocking to a special two-hour edition of *The Price Is Right*, because at Christmas, anything that's put on

display in the shops and looks vaguely festive will be snapped up by eager punters.

Shopkeepers aren't dumb. They know that no-one ever has a clue what to buy anyone else for Christmas, and they know that if they market anything properly (ie make sure the wrapping depicts either a sprig of holly, a robin or a pudding dripping with white sauce) some mug will buy it. And it's the perfect opportunity to unload on the public, stupefied by sentiment and desperation, all the crap that's been selling like condoms in a nunnery all year.

When else would anyone buy socks, or cranberry sauce, or books of any description, or Baileys Irish Cream, or Slade singles, or driving gloves? (I have a theory that this mysterious product 'driving gloves' was invented by some bright spark solely to fill that gap in the Christmas market loosely defined as 'something for Dad/Uncle Herbert' — one of the simplest and cleverest cons ever devised.)

But the cruellest con of Christmas is played on children. Invariably Christmas is a time for the most glaring hypocrisy (a sudden pious concern for the poor, elderly, and lonely, for instance), but there's none more guilty than the parents who pronounce, through mouths stuffed with truffles and chocolates, that they 'only bother with Christmas for the sake of the kids'.

The truth is that it's the grown-ups who get all the

fun at Christmas and children who get the rawest deal. It starts sometime in mid-November, when parents suddenly realise that the presents they're buying for their cherished offspring give them a strong strategic advantage in the skirmishes of family life.

Immediately the parents launch a campaign of fiendish bribery. The poor mites pay a rich ransom for their promised Tonka toys, Rambo machine guns and BMX bikes. Any hint of mischief or disobedience is countered with the familiar veiled threats: 'Father Christmas doesn't come to children who call their mother a bossy old witch with worms for hair and a face like a pig', or 'if you don't eat your nice spinach-and-stewed-prune casserole guess who won't be coming to visit'.

True, the kids have been rooting through mummy's wardrobe, making detailed inspections of all the goodies coming their way, but that does nothing to lessen the threat — they know the rules governing the return of goods, and they saw the receipts in her purse that time they were 'counting her money'.

And after the weeks of impeccable behaviour, the day itself is even worse. Hordes of elderly relatives suddenly descend on the house to patronisingly pat the little ones on the head, tell them how much they've grown, give them laughably unsuitable gifts and chomp their way through all the chocolates and sweets (including personal Selection Boxes) in the house; the Queen's speech is compulsory, and escaping to play with friends is out of the question.

As for the poor kids in hospital, they have to contend with all the minor celebrities who come crawling out of the wood-work and into the wards at Christmas. It's bad enough being in hospital as it is, without being plagued by the likes of Timmy Mallet and Paul King, armed to the teeth with Cabbage Patch Dolls.

So this year, while you're coping off at the office party, getting bladdered in the pub, and generally misbehaving, spare a thought for the children.

# CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR



'Come to bed, darling, it's our honeymoon night.' Gene Wilder as Larry Abbot discovers the pleasures of the marriage bed in *HAUNTED HONEYMOON*.

# Circuit training

MARTIN SUTTON slips with unseasonal reluctance into the stalls for this year's Christmas films

## WHAT no Crimble blockbusters?

Traditionally Christmas has always been the period when the distributors eventually unleash the biggies they've been teasing us with for most of the year. Surprisingly there are no Spielberg or Disney epics this time, no eagerly awaited sequels or anything resembling a *Back To The Future* or *Ghostbusters*. In fact apart from *Labyrinth* (which left our very own David Currie unimpressed), there's not that many traditional, family films on release this Christmas.

Most of the national circuit appears to be clogged up with unseasonal heavy dramas, many of which wouldn't be welcome at any time of the year, let alone Christmas.

What's going on? Have the distributors forgotten the fine art of attracting spend-crazy consumers to the box-office?

Of the lighter films that are around, check out **Gene Wilder's** new horror spoof *Haunted Honeymoon* (PG). It has a few good one-liners, though it was all done

much better in Mel Brooks' similar *Young Frankenstein*.

For something more original, try *Crocodile Dundee* (15), a blockbuster Aussie comedy which has been packing 'em in down under and Stateside. **Paul Hogan** plays a rough but honest outback croc-hunter who braves a visit to the streets of New York City. The innocent abroad scenes and Fosters lager-style humour are pretty corny, but Hogan rises above it as a tongue-in-cheek superhero in leather hat and singlet.

A good creepy horror movie is always a useful corrective to too much festive goodwill. *Critters* (15) is just the job, and reminiscent of the marvellous *Gremlins*. The creatures of the title are furry balls of fanged ferocity who flee from another planet to besiege a cute, white-painted mid-Western farmhouse. Definitely worth seeing.

Less recommended, but still good, is *Psycho 3* (18). Just when you thought it really was safe to go back in the shower, **Norman Bates** dusts off his knife, restuffs mom, and opens the motel again. This time around, **Anthony Perkins** gets to wield the knife and sit in the director's chair. Gadzooks!

Of the heavy dramas, *Kangaroo* (PG) is a rather flat, over wordy adaptation of **D H Lawrence's** thrown together novel, based on his stay in Australia in 1922. Once again, Lawrence proves a boring old fart, expounding on sex and society as if he understood either.

Just as stodgy — like wading through cold porridge — is **Natassja Kinski** in *Harem* (15). A modern-day white slave trade tale which is offensive all round, it proves that Ms Kinski needs acting lessons immediately.

A little more interesting is *Eat The Peach* (PG), an off-beat Irish comedy/drama featuring a down-at-heel biker who builds a wall of death at the end of his

backyard. Nice idea, shame about the way it's constructed.

If you do need a dose of the heavies, you can do better. *Smooth Talk* (15) is about a teenage girl, growing away from her parents, who invites the attentions of a half-crazed rapist. It evokes small-town teen boredom very nicely, but the suggestion that she deserves her fate is less intelligent.

Don't be put off by *Twice In A Lifetime* (15), the story of a married man (**Gene Hackman**, in great form) who falls for another woman on his 50th birthday. It's funny, tender and sure puts oldsters in a new light.

Best of all, though, is a jazz drama called *Round Midnight* (15). It's all smokey Paris cellar bars, seedy hotel rooms, a brilliant though alcoholic saxophonist, and music which will have you dusting off your old man's LPs. It moves slowly, like an old blues number, but hang on in there as this one is the bizz.

Finally, *Real Genius* (15), *Labyrinth* (U), and *Explorers* (U) are aimed at the indistinct 'youth' market.

A pity enough, *Real Genius* is the most intelligent and unpatronising of them. With a good script and brilliant performances, it's about a group of teen scientific eggheads getting their brains picked by militaristic authorities. The balance between hilarity and message is fairly well sustained, though it's fair to carp at the lack of even one interesting female character. *Labyrinth* has twice the pretensions, many times the budget, and works only half as well (see review in main Bowie feature).

*Explorers* — director Joe Dante's first film since *Gremlins* — is an eye-popping Spielberg-style space epic which triumphs by being totally off-the-wall. The three teenage heroes, and the aliens they closely encounter, are outsiders to their respective worlds. This is the full version, unlike the video now on release, so see it at the cinema.

Well, there you have it. Is it to be **Norman Bates** on taxidermy, a holiday harem in the Atlas Mountains, an alcoholic saxophonist on the Left Bank or hi-tech Muppets? Or can you take the lot? I doubt it.

A lonely moment for Dale Turner (played by Gordon Dexter), as he plays steel blues on his sax in *ROUND MIDNIGHT*

Everyone's typical macho Aussie honcho, **CROCODILE DUNDEE** is played by Paul Hogan.

EXPLORERS — a cuddly alien takes a peek.



The Motel at the crossroads is the gothic star of *PSYCHO III*.



# LM GETS YOU Ü PISTE

But LM's ROUGH GUIDE travel team still manage to find their way around the ski slopes of Europe. JOHN FISHER reports on the before, during and après-ski



If you're prepared to rough it in the often bitterly cold and windy weather, then Aviemore can work out very cheap.

**E**VEN if you don't know your piste from your stem christie, or wedelling from schnapps, a short ski trip can create a convert for life. It's a thrill which, as any skier will tell you, no other sport can match. It's also the best known means of coming home with a great tan in the middle of February.

Trouble is, it's probably also the most expensive form of entertainment devised since the three card trick. You may see **From £45** flashed across the front of all the brochures - but don't for a moment believe that you can really ski for that little (see **Hidden Costs**). £200 a week would be more realistic once you've added in skis and other special gear and all the food and drink you'll get through once there. Even to do this you'll need to study the brochures carefully and to resist the powerful temptation of ski shops full of wind-tunnel tested, fully-lined mink underwear.

So what do you really need? Skis and boots obviously — but these you'll hire when you arrive. It's a waste of money buying them if you're just starting out and there's no advantage to hiring before you leave — it won't be any cheaper, you'll have to lug heavy equipment halfway across Europe, and you won't be able to change the boots when they turn out not to fit. As for clothes, try and borrow them. If you know anyone who skis this is easier than you might think — ski gear is fairly baggy so exact sizes don't matter too much, and all skiers feel secretly guilty about spending fortunes on silly clothes they only wear once a year.

The important thing is to stay warm (and dry) even when the weather turns really rough. A good anorak — preferably one that does up high round your neck and has loads of pockets — is essential; but it doesn't have to be one made specifically for skiing. Make it big so you can cram plenty of layers underneath. Trousers do need to be special — best are the big quilted dungaree-type *salopettes*. These may look stupid but they're warm, comfortable and the padding comes into its own when you land in the snow twentieth time around. Decent gloves are important too — hefty leather or plastic bikers' or skiers' jobs. And you shouldn't venture out onto the snow without sunglasses (better than goggles except when there's a blizzard), the strongest sun tan cream you can buy (at this altitude the rays burn even through cloud) and a woolly hat.

Thus equipped you're ready to go, and the only outstanding question is where. And how? All the countries where you can ski have per-



of their own; France super-efficient, modern and charmless; Austria for olde worlde charm and bonhomie in the bars; Switzerland outrageously expensive and flooded with the beautiful people; Italy cheaper and friendlier, but with rickety old run-down lifts. These alpine countries have been at it for years; now a generation of ski countries are baying at their heels and in terms of price giving them a thoroughly hard time. Pyrenean skiing in Andorra and Spain, Balkan slopes in Yugoslavia and Romania, even a Highland fling in Aviemore can prove better deals these days.

Once you've studied the small print, there's

not much to choose between all the package tour operators, but it is worth comparing which is best value for the place you want to go at the time you want to go — they all have slightly different ideas on what are high and low seasons. The cheapest deals mostly involve travelling by overnight coach, not particularly comfortable but a big money saver over the plane. Look too for all-in beginners' packages which include equipment hire, ski school and a lift pass, and for companies which charge no extra for departures from your local airport/coach station.

NAT (Holiday House, Domestic Rd, Leeds, LS12

6HR; 0532 434077) offer both these: **Campus Travel** (52 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1 and at USIT student travel offices in Bristol, Oxford, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Dundee) are if anything even better value, and aimed particularly at young people. Other good cheap deals from **Tentrek** (152 Maidstone Rd, Ruxley Corner, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 5HS; 01-302 6426); **Top Deck** (64 Kenway Rd, London, SW5; 01-373 5095) and **Ski Lovers** (11 Liston Court, High St, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1ER; 06284 76991). Or for a more consciously 'fun' atmosphere try **Club 18-30, Freestyle** or **Ski Youngworld**.

tradition: very pretty, lots of jolly nightlife and fattening food, and the skiing's not too bad either. People who've done it before can get more serious about their skiing at **Obergurgl** — a much larger place with a more extensive terrain which still does its best at village atmosphere.

## ■ Aviemore, Scotland

YOU might be forgiven for thinking that skiing in Britain would be much cheaper than crossing the Channel to do it, and if you live in Scotland it is. From south of the border, however, it rarely works out that way. This is partly because there are hardly any package deals, partly because, from most of England, it's as far to the Cairngorms as it is to the Alps. Add to that the weather which is far too often bitterly cold and extremely windy, plus fewer skilifts than even the small resorts in the glossy brochures, and it's not really worthwhile unless you live close enough to drive up for the weekend.

Having said all that, **Aviemore** can work out very cheap if you're prepared to rough it a bit and to make your own arrangements. **National Express** buses will get you there for around £30 return from London, £25 from Manchester (direct) or from just about anywhere else if you change in Glasgow (slightly more expensive): £39.50 from Bristol; £35 from Birmingham; £29.50 from Leeds). In Aviemore, if you book ahead, there's a **Youth Hostel** which charges only about £4 a night (tel. 0479 810345). Add ski hire, ski school, lift pass and food and you might still get a week's skiing for less than £150.

## HIDDEN COSTS

**FIRST** of all, remember that the £50 deals are usually in the first week of December before the snow has arrived (saves money on hiring skis etc, but rather defeats the object) or at times which for other good reasons (foul weather mostly) are out of season. Then add the following things which are going to violently increase the price of your skiing holiday.

■ **Ski and boot hire:** about £20 a week in the cheaper places, half as much again in Austria, twice as much in France.

■ **Ski School:** however good the friend who offers to teach you may be, you won't learn properly without taking classes — from £20 a week depending on how many hours you do.

■ **Lift Pass:** the big one, and the main reason why it's not worth beginners going to a big resort where you can pay as much as £70 a week — more realistically, from £30 in Andorra to £60 in Tignes, France. In some places beginners are best off buying individual tickets for lifts, but this can become an infuriating waste of time.

■ **Watch out that all these prices vary quite a lot from country to country and with changes in the exchange rates, so check what your brochure says about surcharges or, if you're going to be paying yourself, how the 'typical' prices quoted in the brochure (and here) might have changed.**



## ■ Soldeu, Andorra and Super Molina, Spain

**ANDORRA** seems to be the place where all the budget ski deals head first — as much for cheap booze as for the cheap skiing. **Soldeu** is much the best of the resorts, with good beginners skiing let down only by long walks to get there. It's not a pretty country, but if you plan to get seriously drunk each night you'll find nowhere to do it in better company or for less money.

Spanish resorts just over the border have been growing fast too, and for the skiing as opposed to what happens après I'd choose one of these. **Super Molina** is probably the best, a scenic old resort with new bits added up the mountain and snow making machines to ensure skiing all season on the nursery slopes.

## ■ Borovets, Bulgaria and Sarajevo, Yugoslavia

**EASTERN** European skiing can appear more expensive than it really is — it's a much longer flight to get there in the first place and you'll probably be staying in a relatively classy hotel. But once there spending the money you've taken can be a real problem. And not only because there's nothing worth buying in the shops. Of the resorts, **Borovets** is cheap but rather basic; **Sarajevo** (site of the last Winter Olympics as well as the assassination that started World War I) has yet to be much discovered despite all its wonderful new facilities — try **Yugotours**. It has amazingly lively night life too.

## ■ Livigno and Bormio, Italy

**ITALIAN** skiing always used to be a bit of a joke around the Alps, but nowadays it's the Italians laughing as the others price themselves out of existence. Okay so things are bit ramshackle

## ■ Flaine and Tignes, France

**FRANCE** looks cheap in the brochures mainly because it's close — once you get there prices are relatively high. Nevertheless if you want to ski and do very little else there's nowhere to match it. **Flaine** is typical: a little cluster of high-rise blocks dumped in a bowl of mountains high above the tree line where you step out of your apartment door (mostly very cramped self-catering affairs) straight onto the snow and ski down to the lift or to ski school. Not much happens at night but by day you can ski non-stop on a whole range of easy and intermediate runs, and when you progress you can ski over the mountains to similar places in adjoining valleys.

**Tignes** looks much the same but set, in the valley next to Val d'Isere, in the midst of some of the world's best ski slopes, it really justifies the superlatives in the brochures (and the high prices). Maybe not for beginners, this is paradise for serious skiers prepared to give up the nightlife in return for rewards by day.

## ■ Alpbach and Obergurgl, Austria

If you're stuck with a vision of yourself supping *gluhwein* and slapping your thighs in a picture-postcard Alpine chalet, it'll have to be Austria. **Alpbach** is the resort which exemplifies all this



# SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS

The heavy clatter of transcription echoes around LM's Ludlow office as PAUL STRANGE puts THE STRANGLERS' Hugh Cornwell through his paces.

**H**MUST have caught him in a bloody good mood.

Renowned for pulling pranks, kidnapping journalists, upsetting foreign police and often choosing the right to remain silent, Hugh Cornwell is regarded as a hack's nightmare.

Perhaps he's mellowed. Perhaps he's matured. Or perhaps he needs the press.

One thing's for certain: he's pleased with the new Stranglers' album. He can't stop talking ▷

about the thing, and to be fair he's got a point. *Dreamtime* — The Stranglers' ninth studio LP after 12 years in the business — is an encouraging, intriguing, sometimes riveting work, reminiscent in feel, commitment, style and sheer bravado to the band's first three albums, but with the musical diversity and dexterity found in their later work.

Cornwell nods.

'It's the best album we've ever done,' he declares, settling into a comfy chair at his publicist's office just off Marylebone. 'Everything sounds exactly as I wanted it to sound. When I listen to it I don't want to switch it off at any one point. I listen to it all.'

He scratches his bony thoughtfully, looks at his shoes, realises he's not wearing any socks, checks his flies and continues.

'Some of the songs on *Dreamtime* are individual ideas, while others look back at lost causes. *Big In America* — which could be our next single — is an individual one.

'Everything's big in the States: they have the biggest cockroaches in the world, Vietnam veterans are big, and women are very big — I mean emotionally and personality-wise, not physically. Women are so big emotionally that it seems the men have got to be liberated!'

**" In America a guy will say 'I'm going out to get laid'. It probably means a guy sitting there, waiting for a woman to come up and grab him, throw him on a bed and start bonking his brains out! "**

'In England a lot of guys will say 'I'm going to pull tonight' — which assumes the active role of meeting women — whereas in America a guy will say 'I'm going out to get laid', which is a passive way of describing something. It probably means a guy sitting there waiting for a woman to come up and grab him, throw him on a bed and start bonking his brains out!'

'American men seem scared of showing any sort of primitive, caveman activity because American women will go 'HEY! This is an emancipated society and you're not allowed to do that in this country!'

'If a woman did that over here, blokes would say 'She must be a dyke,' which is just as stupid. I'm not advocating that women should act that way over here; I'm just fascinated by human behaviour and the way people think.'

He pauses, scratches his five o'clock shadow, checks his shirt buttons and takes a sip of tea.

'I'm proud of all the lyrics on *Dreamtime*,' he continues. 'They're well sorted because we had about 18 months to think about them.'

*Dreamtime* itself is based on an Aborigine concept. It seemed to symbolise something to us — the idea of lost causes and Utopian concepts being overtaken by the harsh realities of modern life. The Aborigines are a perfect example of that; they've got this wonderful culture — which is difficult to explain in English — and slowly they're being robbed of it.

'Australian mining companies are realising that the Aborigine's sacred grounds are full of uranium so they're taking the land off them and destroying it for purely commercial reasons. The Aborigines have turned round and said 'Look, this land is part of our culture. If you're going to destroy it, then you're destroying us'.

'*Dreamtime* is the closest word in English which pins down this concept of Aborigine culture. They look at the world *objectively*, whereas in the modern world western people see the world *subjectively*. In the west everything has meaning through you, but the

Aborigines believe that they're just an accident, that the world happens whether you're there or not, and the world happens anyway through using you; you're part of it, but you're immaterial.'

'It's a fatalistic attitude, and it's not very conducive to the competitive world we live in. At the same time it pinpoints the importance of Nature, it gives Nature the central role in life and everything else is just circumstantial.'

'The Aborigines look at their landscape and say 'My forefathers were here and my mother was born there and now she's in that rock over there, and I will become that tree'.'

'It's a nice way of looking at things because when they cut down a tree they are cutting themselves down or one of their parents, so it makes them aware of their environment.'

'We would probably look at a tree and say 'Oh well, I'll cut it down and burn it because it's going to make me warm', whereas they see it differently. It's a naive way of looking at things but an attractive way.'

Utterly fascinating. Go on.

'*Too Precious* is about the diamonds in South Africa — the black culture there is almost a lost cause, while *Mayan Skies* is about the raping and pillaging of Mexico for commercial interests by the Spanish a long time ago.

'You see the way we look upon things now doesn't seem to be any more sophisticated than it was two million years ago — it's just as stupid, just as naive, just as self-centred and just as fucked up as it ever was. Nothing's really changed; instead of carrying clubs about, we've all got video screens now.'

And what of the video age?

'I love it. We've just been rehearsing in a studio and they've got a video game there called *Gauntlet*. It's all on different levels, what a game! Sorcerers meeting seraphim and grunts and things, and you get to another level and it says (adopts deep, authoritative tone) 'Remember on level five, sorcerers can be invisible, and grunts bite', and all this. It's so sophisticated ... I think it's great.'

**" We've just been rehearsing in a studio and they've got *Gauntlet*. What a game! Sorcerers meeting seraphim and grunts and things. It's so sophisticated ... I think it's great. "**

'I don't know where it's going to end though. I'm sure that at some stage you'll be able to buy a film and take part in it. You'll be able to write the plot and determine what happens in the film because they'll have a chip in there which will give you different possibilities.'

'You'll be in the film battling against Al Pacino or somebody, and you'll have ten options. Whichever option you take will change the plot ... I'm sure it's going to get like that.'

More tea arrives and Cornwell takes a breather. Five minutes later he's back, fuming about the video for *Always The Sun*. The video ran into problems when it was offered to children's TV programmes; they objected to Cornwell firing a gun in it.

'Ridiculous,' he says. 'Every day on kid's programmes you see 20 people being shot and blasted by things. I fired the gun not at a person but at a target. It's hypocrisy. Anyway, we've done an arty version without the gun so they'll be happy now.'

'There are some quite serious references in the song, but it should be viewed optimistically. If you wake up in the morning and the sun

isn't shining, you might as well forget about it. In the end — whatever goes wrong and however crazy it gets — as long as the sun comes up in the morning there's something to live for. You've got to start worrying when the sun doesn't come up in the morning.'

'And *Nice In Nice* (which refers to a riot at a Stranglers gig in Nice a few years ago and resulted in a spell of imprisonment for Cornwell), is a humorous memory. I always look back at it and laugh; it was so stupid.'

The song was reminiscent of the 'old' cold and hard Stranglers' sound, circa 77/78.

'Yeah, a certain kind of person bought it, whereas *Always The Sun* seems to be going right across, everyone seems to like that one.'

What sort of person buys Stranglers' music?

'All sorts of people ... it doesn't bother me who buys our records — be they 70-year-old groovers or 15-year-old nutters!'

Is it hip to buy a Stranglers' album?

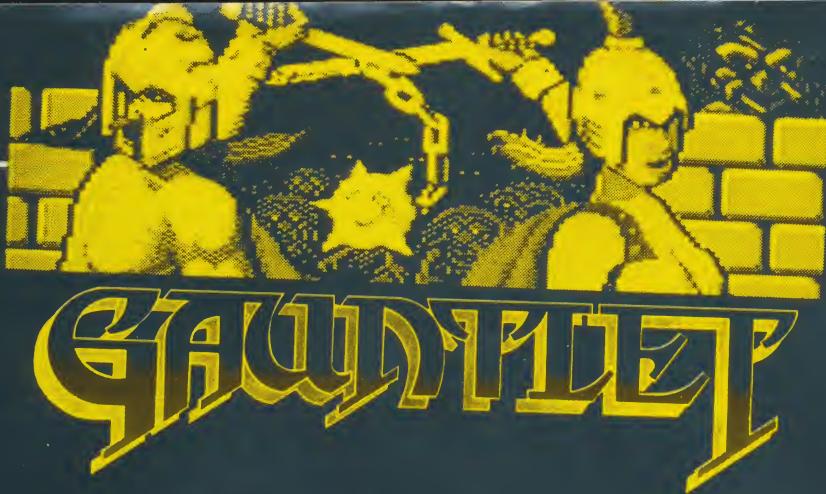
Cornwell shifts uneasily in his chair.

'I'm so busy with my work that I haven't got time to worry about that,' he says. 'It's all meaningless anyway. People that are hip today are un-hip tomorrow, so I'd rather not be involved with any of it. It's absolute nonsense. That peer group, you know, 'We've got a hip audience, and they haven't got a hip audience ... I mean you're either doing it because you enjoy doing it and you want to make a living from it, or you're not.'

When The Stranglers first started did you ever consider that you'd still be together 12 years later?

'I thought that I'd still be involved in music as a living, but you never know how you're





# GUITAR

going to end up. I thought we had a pretty good chance of being together because it was a strong unit, particularly once Dave Greenfield joined us on keyboards.'

The new wave coincided neatly with your arrival.

'Yes, it was rather fortunate. I'm glad it happened when it did. It was very funny to see some of those groups actually manufacturing their look. There was nothing manufactured about us — we had torn clothes because that was all we had.'

The new wave was a backlash against the lumbering super-groups of the early Seventies, and yet The Stranglers are still plodding on, 12 years later.

'Yeah, I'm sure a lot of people look at us as one of the dinosaurs of rock, just as we did with Yes and Genesis back in the mid-Seventies. If they think that, then they should replace us. I'd be quite happy.'

'But current music is dull. There's very little around. I guess if you were talking to a kid of

**“** Current music is dull. There's very little around. I guess if you were talking to a kid of 15 they'd say 'Oh no, there's hip-hop, The Smiths, The Jesus And Mary Chain' and so on, but I can't see any substance there. **”**

15 they'd say 'Oh no, there's hip-hop, The Smiths, The Jesus And Mary Chain' and so on, and although I can see certain elements in those kinds of music which are appealing, because I'm not a 15-year-old I can't see any substance there. The Stranglers have already been superseded because I'm able to say that, but at least I'm aware of it.

So why are The Stranglers still successful? 'Audiences are getting older and bigger. Sometimes I take a mini-cab and the drivers are 45, or 50, and they've got the new Dylan or Dire Straits tape in the car. Twenty years ago, people of that age weren't appreciating music that was around at the time. Audiences are getting much, much bigger and so there's more room for people like us to continue and still have a big audience.'

And the future?

'I've no idea. If the group's plans don't conflict with individual plans, then there's no reason why we shouldn't continue.'

'It would be sad if we ended up hating each other. We're all pretty creative, we've been together so long that we know what works, everybody's got their role in the group and it works well. And although those roles are quite staid, it's the most creative way that things happen. Individual projects are still important though, because otherwise you stagnate.'

Cornwell looks at his watch, and leaps to his feet.

'I've got to go,' he says. 'I should have been the other side of London about 15 minutes ago.'

Extraordinary. Any parting thoughts?

'Yeah, I think we've been around so long that we've become part of the establishment. I'm sure it's getting to the stage where some parents who want to buy their kid an album for Christmas will think 'I'll get them The Stranglers' one, because they're bound to like that.'

'Now that's a really funny way of looking at it.'

You said it, Hugh.



Hunter's Minson's

# Mondo Bizarro

In which our intrepid hero, life, visa and AmEx in hand scours the streets of Los Angeles on the

## Hollywood Trail

THE flight seemed a lot longer than eleven hours and I started to know how a battery hen feels. No room to stretch. Nowhere to walk. Even the odd bursts of conversation with the woman who had flown from Kenya to London, before joining this plane to Los Angeles, had died out. God — she must have been more screwed up than I was.

If I ever make a flight of this length again, I'll ensure that whoever is paying is conned into providing, at the very least, First Class Accommodation. Because when you sit for eleven hours, right behind the Business Class compartment, you also start to share the feelings of the French Revolutionaries.

While your meal comes complete with an abundance of cling film around a small portion of neatly cubed plastic dessert, you can glimpse the weary businessmen being served fresh fruit from a basket before the stewardess twitches the curtain — it can easily become as potent a symbol of social inequality as the wall of the Paris commune. Now where did I put the guillotine?

So I rolled off the plane in an advanced state of paranoia, by now unsure what lay ahead in this, my first encounter with America's western seaboard. Actually, my whole body had no idea of where it was or what time it should be. It felt like a long, exhausted sleep, while the daylight told it that it was still late afternoon.

Officially, I was in LA for purely hedonistic reasons. Stick around a week and

soak up some atmosphere. But what I didn't tell the immigration official, who wanted to know whether I'd be working (in which case I could get straight back on the next plane for some good ol' English unemployment), was that I had an interview lined up. An interview with the last great independent film director. The man who invented the nudie film. The greatest king of exploitation ... ever!

Or rather — I almost had an interview lined up. What followed was at times nightmare, at times farce, as messages were left and appointments made, cancelled, then reinstated, through no fault of either party. The one thing that could be said of this limbo, as I awaited the eventual meeting, was that it gave me time to explore the City of Angels.

There is one other important feature in this tale. I was not travelling alone. For reasons too long and unbelievably complex to explain here (plus it could get libellous if I name names), I had a companion whom I had never met before.

In fact, we hadn't met until we were within a hour or so of LA International Airport, one of the most dangerous places in this whole psychotic city. I heard of a female cab driver who was pulled out through the open window of her cab and mugged. Like the signs say, 'Welcome to LA'.

Anyhow, my compatriot and myself decided to drown out jetlag in the nearest bar we could find. We would have drunk at the hotel, but our failure to

arrange second mortgages before leaving home meant that we'd have been limited to a choice of iced water or tepid water.

Instead we ended up knocking back Wild Turkey at something like three dollars a shot, and keeping it happy with pathetic little cocktail beers. I spent at least eleven quid in a couple of hours, and as I did so it became obvious that my companion and myself did not share the same tastes. The more we drank, the more he urged me to blow another fifty quid on a coach to Disneyland.

'It's not what you think,' he kept saying. 'It's not for kids at all.' I remained as polite as I could, but in my



mind I kept telling myself that the only way I'd visit that hell-hole of family entertainment and good clean fun was in a state of terminal craziness, induced by every dangerous and illegal substance I could lay a finger on.

And the Disney organisation doesn't look too kindly on that sort of behaviour. Disneyland is well sanitised. Where the odd real horse has been allowed to stray into a parade, there

are Mickey Mouse poop scoopers following its every step. Listen, if they follow a horse because it might shit, what would they do with a babbling journalist in a Hawaiian shirt who kept shouting obscenities into a tape recorder strapped to his left arm?

No, I didn't feel clean enough or crazy enough to try to storm the wholesome empire so I vowed to make my own pilgrimage in this, the immortal city of a thousand myths.

Severely hung over and with a body that was still in a state of not knowing whether it was Danton or a bantam, I stepped off the bus at Hollywood and Vine. This is the corner where, according to legend, it all started. If Broadway is the great white way because of its theatre lights, Hollywood Boulevard is the great white way because of the prodigious cocaine tracks that decay the nasal cavities of stars, producers and no-hoppers alike.

Now in Los Angeles, nobody walks. In some areas of Beverley Hills, walking is considered such a suspicious act that you'll get arrested for it. True! I got shown an apartment block where each dwelling came complete with a free Rolls Royce. Considering you'd almost inevitably own one of these status symbols on wheels if you could afford a flat here, that would make you a two Roller family.

The tattooed man — was Ray Bradbury ever here?



I was travelling by bus though, when I had to, in a hot, noisy, wild throng of street punks and Spanish-speaking Mexicans from downtown. And at other times I was going on foot. Because that's how you get to encounter the street life.

Though I was rather taken with the musical knickers, my favourite piece of haute couture had to be the male undergarment neatly sewn into the shape of an elephant. 'Hey honey — are you glad to see me or is it just feeding time for Dumbo?'

Actually, as I crossed one side road into the midst of a crowd consisting of two Spanish pimps, four or five painted whores and a gaggle of bikers, I began to wonder if a car wasn't a bad idea. But even then you're not safe, and the LA PD seals off areas of the city at night and leaves them to the mercy of the roaming gangs.

Still, it was worth it, because this is where you'll find the legendary — like

everything in this town is legendary - Frederick's of Hollywood exotic lingerie shop. For decades now, Mr Frederick has been supplying split crotch panties and edible posing pouches by mail, to the swinging folk of the mid-West. 'Elmer, stop screwin' that chicken and see what just came through the post.' 'Ah prefers the chicken.'

The last important shrine you reach on Hollywood Boulevard, if you survive the pimps, pushers and flashy, beautiful punks, is Mann's Chinese Theatre. This is the one where plastered stars fall down in the cement and make their imprint.

Actually, I challenge anybody not to be moved by the messages scrawled in the pavement. Here are the words of those who were driven to early graves by the very fame that fed

them. Monroe. Garland. But perhaps more moving are the early stars, household names in their day, but who has heard of them now? Such is the fickle nature of fame.

Linger long enough here and a tear will come to your eye. And as you wipe it away somebody will steal your money and you'll be mown down by a fast moving gaggle of tourists on their half day tour of the Hollywood high-spots. Blue rinsed matrons with savage horn-rims, watching the world go by through a mini-bus window.

The only way to go now, as the heat builds up, is to the ocean. Santa Monica boasts a pier but little else in the way of real life. But turn left any weekend and you come to Venice, hang out of weirdoes on roller skates and some of the most extreme busking you'll ever see. Would you believe a jazz pianist in the middle of a beach?! Venice is a laid back sensual delight. It's the place where the body builders pump iron in the pen until they can't get their arms

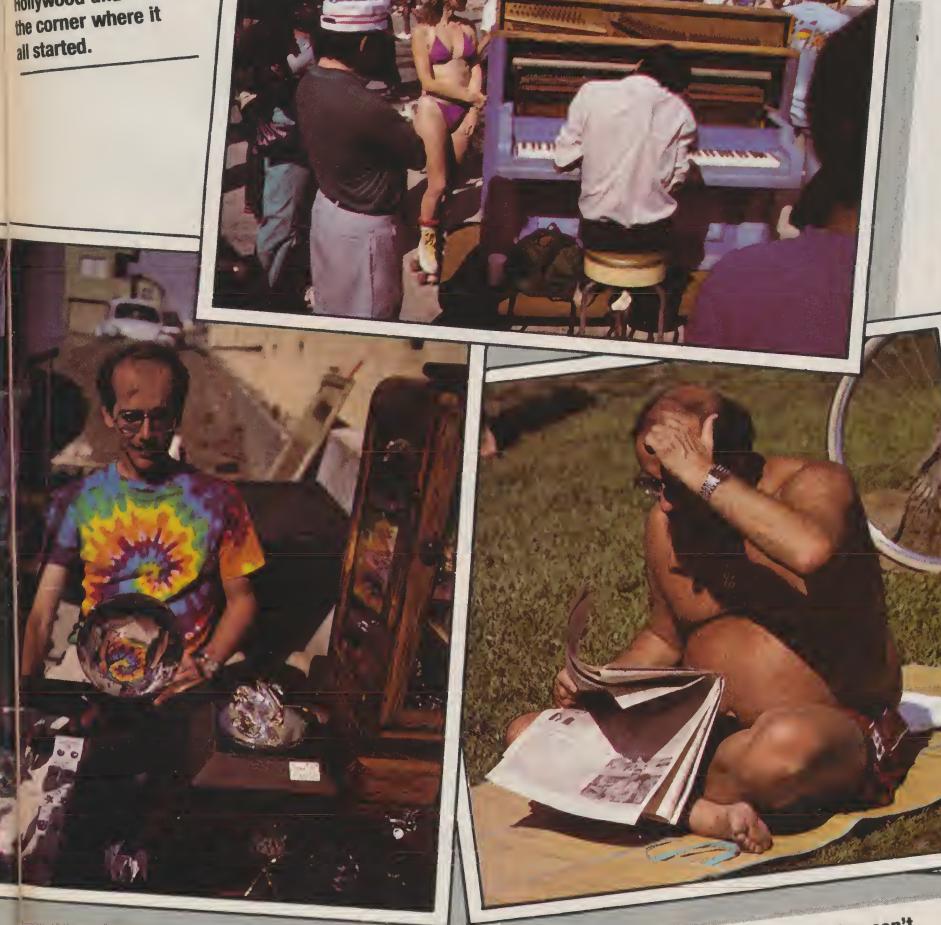
down by their sides. It's the place where you buy crystal balls from a stall.

Alternatively, do as I did. Take the bus to Malibu beach. Get off just before, where there's nothing much. Just a strip of sand and waves. Yeah, just sit there and watch the surfers — black dots on the rolling ocean, gliding effortlessly into land.

The sky had become overcast and a cold sea mist rolled around. The hot barbecue sauce from my sandwich coated my fingers, looking like I'd been gutting fish. The plastic mug of coffee steamed by my feet — and the jet lag almost felt better.

Disneyland, you can keep. It's rank commercialism actively expanding its coffers by creating and supporting a myth that will appeal to the greatest number of people. The result is, inevitably, bland and toothless. But set off and walk those mean streets that Chandler referred to, and you'll become part of another fantasy. A grubbier, downright dangerous, but exhilarating dream of a city. And the real dirt is worth more than any plastic diamonds.

Hollywood and Vine — the corner where it all started.



You've gotta have crystal balls to walk the sands of Venice.

At Venice body builders pump iron until they can't get their arms down by their sides.

Skating over the cocaine tracks of the stars.





## GIVING IT SOME

BECAUSE we're giving away issue zero of LM with a computer magazine, it seemed appropriate to offer some buying advice on a related subject, and what goes across the board better than joysticks? If your old stick is feeling a touch limp from all that frantic waggling over the last 12 months then Christmas is a heaven-sent opportunity to persuade an unwilling relative into purchasing you a new one as a stocking filler. Of course, they'll have no idea what to get, but there's still a couple of weeks to go — time enough to advise them. Take your pick from LM's top selection of tried, tested old favourites and some of the newer exciting ideas from the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers of joysticks.

The testers are Newsfield's various games reviewers from CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and AMTIX! magazines. They've given an overall rating out of 100 per cent to each for stick and fire button responsiveness, ergonomics (how easy it is to hold and use), durability, and value for money.

### 1. ARCADE TURBO

**Price: £22.95**

The Arcade Turbo is well designed, appealing to look at and comfortable to hold. A rubber washer supports the steel shaft, making length of travel short but life expectancy long. For table use three rubber feet on the base give reasonable stability. The base fire buttons have a short and springy travel, making rapid fire easy. Base or top fire buttons are selectable although the latter isn't as easy to use. Although the stick is a little stiff when first used, it soon wears in nicely to become very responsive, making those pixel jumps all that more perfect. Pricey, but for what it offers, certainly worth it.

Overall 93%

### 2. COMPETITION PRO

**Price: £16.95**

Big brother to the Arcade Turbo and just as tough and reliable. Uses the same mechanics and so enjoys the same responsiveness as the Arcade (only it doesn't need as much wearing in). Stick travel is slightly longer than its smaller 'brother' and requires less 'force' to gain appropriate results. Two large, round fire buttons on the base offer excellent response and feedback for both left and right-handed players. An excellent joystick that will last through many delicate, aggressive and skilled gameplaying sessions and it's this quality that justifies the seemingly high price tag.

Overall 97%

### 3. QUICKSHOT I

**Price: £7.95**

The Quickshots I and II are the most popular of joysticks because of availability and because they offer a number of features for a reasonable price. Using the Quickshot I is a bit like holding a banana since it tapers and has a smooth stem. It requires some wrenching to get it from one position to another. In testing the stem became very loose and felt as though it could well break up. At the top sits one fire button, the other is on the base. They aren't very responsive and make rapid fire a chore. Cheap perhaps, but its poor durability and unresponsiveness make it inferior.

Overall 53%



#### 4. QUICKSHOT II

Price: £11.95

This joystick starts where the Quickshot I leaves off. It incorporates a better grip with improved fire buttons and an autofire facility. Suckers on the bottom keep the stick stable during play. The stem is comfortable to hold with two fire buttons at the top forming an index finger trigger and a thumb button. In test similar problems were encountered as with the Quickshot I — creaks and groans and the familiar looseness, but the better contacts make for quicker response times. The autofire left us unimpressed, it shoots in 'pulses' rather than a steady stream of bullets. A reasonable buy for the delicate of hand but if you

play rough you could well end up with a heap of twisted black plastic.

Overall 62%

#### 5. SUPER CONTROLLER

Price: £19.99

This unusually shaped stick looks more like a thin wedge than something to help you play a game. The two side-mounted fire buttons can be rotated up/down to suit your hands. The stem is very short and mushroom shaped with a comfortable grip on the top. Stiff when new, it's incredibly responsive once worn in because of its short travel. The slim base makes it comfortable to hold, although the side-mounted buttons are awkward and they make table play pretty

ineffective. It proves extremely hard wearing and at only £9.99 is below the average price of a joystick.

Overall 85%

#### 6. BAT HANDLE

Price: £27.99

The Bat Handle is very tough and pretty simple in design with a square base and long tapering stem. The two fire buttons are mounted on the base and on the stem. The long travel distance between contacts makes it unresponsive and rather sluggish especially when pixel-crucial jumps and adjustments are needed. It isn't very comfortable to hold and although the base fire button is good, the top fire button is just about useless. Generally the stick just doesn't seem anywhere near good enough to warrant its huge price tag.

Overall 77%

#### 7. THREE WAY

Price: £32.99

Effectively a deluxe version of the Bat Handle, being very similar in appearance but not in performance and price. The stick comes with three freely interchangeable grips that slip with some difficulty over the steel shaft. A Red Ball, a Bat and a Grip Handle are provided. None are particularly comfortable and make the shaft feel separated from the base. The responsiveness of the leaf switch mechanism is undone by the shaft travel distance, making the stick slow to respond to movement. Two different gatelock controls restrict movement to either four or eight directions. The grip fire and base fire buttons, both of high quality, may be used together or just the grip. One to be recommended if it weren't for the ridiculously high price.

Overall 87%

#### 8. THE BOSS

Price: £15.99

One of the cheapest sticks Wico produce and one that suffers as it doesn't have the same 'quality' feel as the Bat Handle and Three Way. Even though it is made from heavy duty components. A single top fire button is unresponsive and sluggish to use. Despite leaf switches the stick is slow, insensitive and 'uncooperative', although its shape makes it comfortable to hold. Diagonals are a pain to get, especially in a tight spot, and the lack of a base fire button makes it unfriendly and awkward to use.

Overall 65%

#### 9. THE JOYBALL

Price: £29.95

Initially regarded with much cynicism, the 'Cherno-ball' as it has affectionately become known, performs excellently. You hold it like a mouse, but it responds like a joystick. There are two fire functions, either rapid fire at one of two selectable speeds — fast or slow — while the other is a single shot fire button. 'Stick' travel is short, so the Joyball is sensitive and proves perfect for precise movements but diagonals are not that easy to obtain. It takes time to get to grips with this

most unusual method of control, but it's worth the effort. The Joyball is a delight to use; it's comfortable, responsive, tough, and adheres to the table well. Rather expensive, but if you have the cash to spare then this is a worthwhile investment.

Overall 93%

#### 10. THE WIZ CARD

Price: £8.95

This one uses a large floating button instead of the more traditional stick for control. The two fire buttons are not independent but pounding away on two responsive fire buttons is easier than beating only one to death. However, the 'stick' itself isn't so easy to use. It works well with most platform games, but it's not so hot on games requiring hard, fast, precise movements, and diagonals are a pain to obtain. Overall a very good, alternative 'controller', and although by no means exceptional, it is tough and very reasonably priced.

Overall 82%

#### 11. PRO ACE

Price: £11.95

This one doesn't perform too well. The stick is slow to respond to movement, and has a long length of travel which makes using it a bit like stirring thick syrup with a plastic spoon. The fire button is fairly responsive, although it feels as if it is also suspended in treacle, which makes it too sluggish for effective rapid fire. The weakest link in an otherwise powerful chain of quality Euromax product.

Overall 52%

#### 12. MICRO ACE

Price: £15.95

Between the Pro Ace and the Micro Ace there are two differences — a red handle and micro switches. Obviously the colour of the handle isn't too important, but the micro switches are, making it a good joystick although it has the same fire button as the Pro Ace. The stick is responsive, and all movements are met with a positive micro switch click. It doesn't 'feel' quite as good as the Euromax Arcade — which is the same price — but it's just as tough and reliable.

Overall 90%

#### 13. MICRO PRO

Price: £16.95

At first glance you might mistake this stick for the Euromax Competition Pro — the two are identical in looks and price. However the Micro Pro has micro switches all round but in test proves only to be as reliable as the Comp Pro, not more so. Initially very stiff, a few wiggles soon wear it in very nicely. Rapid fire is easily obtained, and both buttons (and the stick itself) take a lot of punishment.

Overall 97%

#### 14. PROFESSIONAL PLUS

Price: £19.95

The first designer joystick? Don't be misled by the trendy chic black casing, yellow fire buttons and matching bangle at the base of the shaft — it performs as well as it looks. Seem-

ingly loose to begin with, it doesn't take long to get used to the feel. Microswitches provide a responsive click and medium length of travel results in great speed and precision. An autofire on/off switch positioned neatly at the side stays firmly in position rather than slipping at inopportune moments. A bit steep in price but well worth it as it seems to have no faults and stands up to virtually any degree of punishment.

#### 15. ELITE

Price: £16.95

Two circular pads house the stick and the fire button. Microswitches provide a more positive feel but the thin, tapering shaft feels slightly loose and makes diagonals fiddly. The small size also makes fast wagging difficult. As an all-rounder the Elite doesn't come up to the mark. It looks great, but feels strangely delicate — as if it might break with the slightest over-exertion. One for the younger gamesplayer, perhaps?

Overall 78%

#### 16. MACH 1

Price: £14.95

Based on The Cheetah, the Mach 1 apparently took nine months to develop, and is equipped with microswitches. It also includes a 'high grade' metal shaft and a comfortable moulded grip. Unfortunately it is lacking in a few areas. It doesn't feel particularly sturdy, although no major problems were encountered during playtesting. Its length of travel is far too long, making most games tested surprisingly difficult to play and diagonals hard to obtain. The base fire buttons aren't overly responsive and need to be worn in while the top two fire buttons are superfluous and don't perform at all well — the on/off autofire switch does however.

Overall 80%

The Arcade (1), Competition Pro (2), Joyball (9), Wiz Card (10), Pro Ace (11), Micro Ace (12), Micro Pro (13), Pro Plus (14) and Elite (15) are all by Euromax Electronics Ltd, Pinfold Lane, Bridlington, North Humberside YO16 5XR. Tel 0262-601006/602541

The Quickshots I (3) and II (4) are by Spectravideo Ltd, 165 Garth Rd, Morden, Surrey SM4 4LH. Tel 01-330 0101

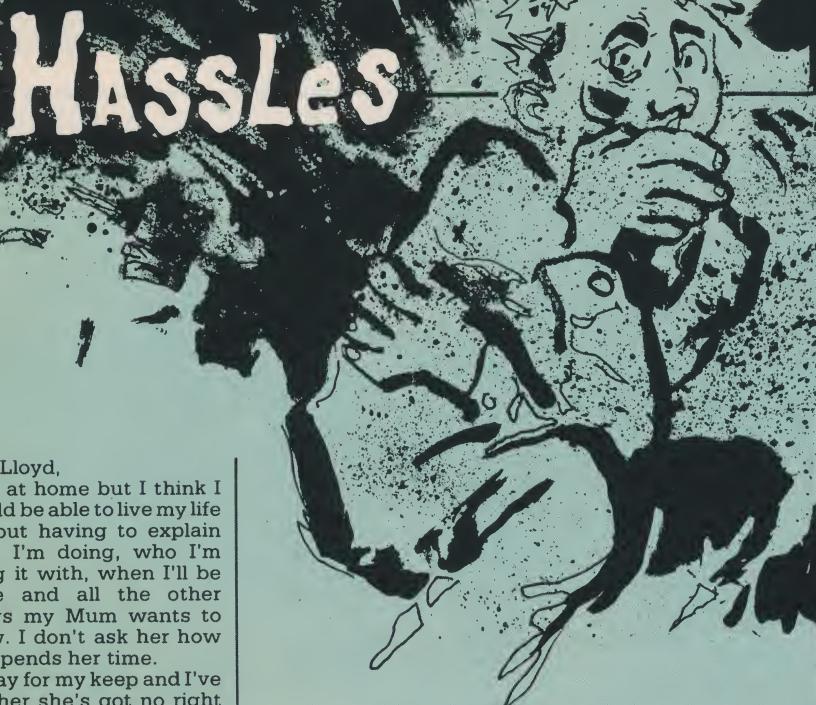
The Super Controller (5) is by Atari Corporation (UK)

The Bat Handle (6), Three Way (7) and The Boss (8) are by Wico, supplier: CGL, CGL House, Goldings Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 2RR. Tel 01-508 5600

The Mach 1 (16) is by Cheetah Marketing, 1 Willowbrook Science Park, Crickhowell Road, St Mellons, Cardiff CF3 0EF. Tel: 0222-777337

LM

# Hassles



Dear Lloyd,  
I live at home but I think I should be able to live my life without having to explain what I'm doing, who I'm doing it with, when I'll be home and all the other things my Mum wants to know. I don't ask her how she spends her time.

I pay for my keep and I've told her she's got no right to ask questions, but nothing stops her. What do I do?

Andrew, Sale, Cheshire

■ Andrew, it's supposed to be a free country and so you have every right to act like an insensitive pig and exploit your mother. Lots of mums put up with it without complaint, though I don't know why. From what you say in your letter, you get all the benefits of living at home — cheap accommodation, maid service, someone concerned about you — yet you won't accept that in return it's only fair to share part of your life with your mother (I'd never advise anyone to tell everything to their parents, but a little is a good idea). Whoever you live with needs a little consideration. You might even find your mum's life interesting if you found out more about it.

If you can't bear the thought of actually communicating with your mother, then you really don't have the right to use her. Maybe if you got out and found a place of your own, and discovered what that costs in time and effort, you might lose some of your interest in insisting on leading a totally independent life.

LM

Dear Lloyd,  
I've just had a row with my girlfriend who is six months pregnant. Now she says she won't give our baby my surname.

Surely I can insist, after all I am the father.

G Rainbow, Kent

■ Technically you may be

## Have you got a problem? Perhaps LM's resident confessional box, LLOYD MANGRAM, can help

the father but unless you marry, your girlfriend will be the sole guardian of the child and that means she can choose any name she likes; hers, yours, a mixture of the two, or something entirely different.

LM

Dear Lloyd,  
I'm sure I've got a money spinning idea and want to start my own business. I have saved some money, but need help to get it off the ground. The government scheme which pays new businesses £40 a week for a year seems the ideal solution, but is this only for people who are unemployed? I'm on a Youth Training Scheme at the moment.

Peter S Knight, Rubery, Birmingham

■ On checking into my massive files I found that the government scheme is called The Enterprise Allowance Scheme and to qualify you must have £1000 to invest in the business, plus have been under notice of redundancy, signing as unemployed OR on an MSC sponsored job creation or training scheme for at least eight weeks. That means your period on the Youth Training Schemes makes you eligible. Also talk to the Small Firms Service. It operates an excellent advice and counselling service for anyone who is considering setting up a business and you can

contact them by dialling the operator and asking for Freephone Enterprise. There, how's that for service?

LM

Dear Sir,  
There isn't a lot of use looking for work here, it just doesn't exist. There's no way I'm going to be exploited by the sort of employer who reckons he can treat you like dirt, make you work ten hours a day without a break, and pay you peanuts. I've experienced it once and it got me nowhere. I was still made redundant at nineteen and a school leaver taken on. I won't do that again, and if I can't get a decent job I'm not going to be anyone's slave.

Now I'm being hassled by the DHSS. I've had two letters asking me to go and discuss why I'm not working. I thought that was daft — the reason's obvious, there's no jobs going. So I didn't bother turning up. Next thing I knew, my giro stopped.

Can they really do this to me? I never thought anyone would be left to starve in 1986.

F Parry, Oldham, Lancs

■ Sorry Mr Parry, but I'm afraid the DHSS can stop your benefit for all sorts of reasons. Remember, you receive benefit because you are unemployed AND willing and available for work. Give them a reason to suspect you are not pre-

pared to take suitable work, or not available if a job comes up, and your right to benefit disappears.

The fact you didn't show up for the interview suggests maybe you don't want to work. So the money's stopped until you make it clear you do. You will have to go for an interview with the Unemployment Review Officer, and you would be wise to show you understand the conditions attached to getting benefit. You are expected to have made some attempt to find work, and if you're putting restrictions on the type of work you'll do, to show these are reasonable. If your restrictions mean it looks like there's no chance to getting a job, you run the risk of having your benefit withdrawn until you change them.

I'm not saying that you're not quite right to refuse to consider some of the jobs on offer these days. A lot of employers do try to get young people as cheap labour, and from what you say you've had your taste of this. Not all jobs are that bad, and most opportunities have to be looked for, so it's still worthwhile putting effort into trying to find a job you might enjoy.

LM

Dear LM,  
I'm living in a flat and use a slot meter for electricity. Recently while I was out at work, someone got in the flat and broke open the meter.

Now the electricity board say I have to pay again for the electricity, since they never got the money.

I don't think it's fair to hold me liable. After all I have paid for the electricity already. Why should I pay twice?

J Singh, Wembley, Middx

■ The electricity board ought not to hold you liable if you reported the break-

in to the police right away and there is no evidence to suggest it was you, or a member of your household, who took the money.

That's the theory anyway, but some boards still try to make the consumer pay for what is stolen from their meter.

Don't let them con you into paying up when you don't have to. Start by disputing the matter yourself, but if you don't get anywhere, then contact an advice bureau or your local Electricity Consumers' Council (address in the phone book) who can back you up by quoting the law to the electricity board.

LM

Dear Lloyd,  
I left school with no regrets and no exams, but now I've met a girl who is a real high-flyer I wish I had tried harder. She says I shouldn't worry but sometimes I feel a real wally when she's talking with her mates. I'd like to be on their level, but my job involves shifts so evening classes are out of the question. Is there any alternative?

Paul, Southampton

■ Obviously it will depend on the degree of your personal application to learning, but there are a large number of correspondence courses available and the best idea is to choose a college which is a member of the Association of Correspondence Colleges. If you write to the address below they should send you details. I found that when I went back to studying I got a lot more satisfaction from learning a subject than I did at school, and perhaps you will too. An extra qualification might help on the job market as well as improving your small talk with high-flying girls.

Association of British Correspondence Colleges, 8 Francis Grove, London SW1 LM

'A problem shared is a problem halved', runs the old adage, but often a problem is one that simply needs a dose of common sense applied to it, or some hard facts not available to the sufferer.

If life is getting you down, if your skin problem is out of hand, if your flat's in a mess and if your bank balance is out of this world, you can always try me out for an answer. I'm a bit of an expert having been something of a mess myself. Guaranteed results are not offered, but if half a problem is worse than none at all, then at least it's better than a full-scale disaster.

Write to: Hassles,  
LM, PO Box 10,  
Ludlow, Shropshire  
SY8 1DB

LM

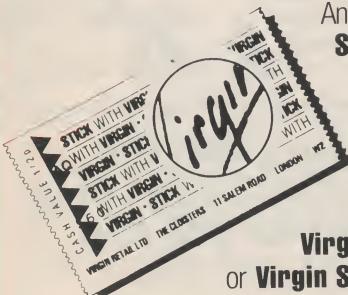
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# UMQUAT

## THE ALIEN



DEFENDER OF FREEDOM, QUESTER AFTER TRUTH AND JUSTICE, PRESIDENT OF THE GALACTIC TAIL-WAGGERS CLUB, SEEKER OF WISDOM AND CHEAPO SOUVENIRS, PRANIE OF THE UNIVERSE, GALLUMPHING GOURMET, DUNCE OF SMARTS, AND STAR OF COMIC STRIPS! OH!... AND HIS COMPUTER... ANN DROID...



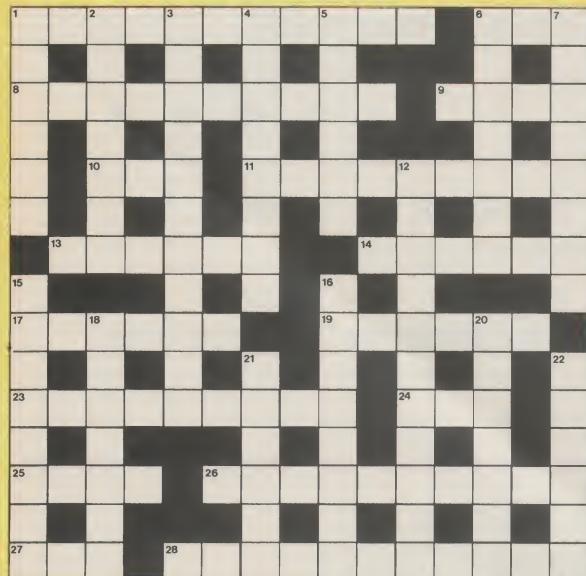
POSSESSOR OF AWESOME POWERS OF MIND-OVER-MATTER. THIS GUY CAN CONTROL ALMOST ANY BRAIN IN THE WHOLE WIDE UNIVERSE NEAR MIDDLESBROUGH. NOT MANY ALIENS CAN DO THAT! NOT MANY ALIENS LIVE AROUND MIDDLESBROUGH...



AN' GUESS WOT!... THIS HERE ALIEN IS COMING TO LM MAGAZOON IN ISSUE 1 NEXT MUNF! YES HE IS! AND YOU CAN FOLLOW HIS ADVENTURES! YES YOU CAN! YOU CAN'T WAIT CAN YOU?..... SO CAN I!



## WIN A CURRY!



### ACROSS

- 1 They boss pop (anag) (3,4,4)
- 6 Help for live band (3)
- 8 Torturous heavy metal band (4,6)
- 9 This band really motored (4)
- 10 Elvis' first label (3)
- 11 Sam Cooke rattled this one out in 1959 (5,4)
- 13 Small-time rugby competition (6)
- 14 The Kid's language (6)
- 17 Pip pip! This band went like clockwork (6)
- 19 Gear shifter (6)
- 23 Drag Lance around to hear Paul Simon album (9)
- 24 Streisand finds support in her first name (3)
- 25 US state where a hut is rebuilt (4)
- 26 What Ben and Tracy have (10)
- 27 Tennis player with cash (3)
- 28 The Boss (11)

DOWN

- 1 His royal purlessness (6)
- 2 This role was a drag for Dustin (7)
- 3 The group that spawned Heaven 17 (6,5)
- 4 British singer, possibly related to 1 down (8)
- 5 A rope's rearranged for these musical productions (6)
- 6 Language of *The Chicken Song* (7)
- 7 Calvin Klein's resigned to being one (7)
- 12 Anthony Perkins' psychiatric motel owner (6,5)
- 15 One of Daley's big events (4,4)
- 16 It gets hot here for the Bears and the Redskins (8)
- 18 Stuart Goddard, the unyielding pop star (4,3)
- 20 Picture a John Lennon song (7)
- 21 Silver platter (6)
- 22 Leader of one of Frankie's two tribes (6)

Don't forget to fill in this form and send it with the crossword. Send a photocopy if you don't want to cut up the magazine.

Name .....  
 Address .....  
 Postcode .....

**Curry favour with the London Editor! See LM in action! Win an LM cap and T-shirt!**

WHAT's all this then? Yep, it's the very first LM prize crossword, a stunningly difficult and fiendish puzzle designed and destined to keep you fascinated, thrilled and enthralled for, oh, at least five minutes.

London Editor David ('Pass me that curry') Cheal solved it within seconds, but Dep Ed Paul ('Here come my bhajees') Strange was still stuck after seven hours (mind you, crosswords have never been his strong point; dot to dot puzzles give him a hard time as it is).

Enough of this guff; back to the business in hand. Since this is a special issue of LM we thought we'd offer a stunning and highly unusual prize for the first correctly answered crossword to come out of the mailbag after the competition's closing date.

Not only will you win a highly treasured LM cap and T-shirt, but the London Editor will treat you to a free curry at a restaurant of his choice. Alternatively (if you live nearer LM's Ludlow HQ), the Deputy Editor will treat you to a free curry at the restaurant of his choice and show you round LM's office. Gripping, huh? And if you don't like curry, then tough. Oh, all right then, we could make it fish 'n' chips, but it's not quite the same is it?

Right, get down to it then, cut out your completed crossword form, and send it to LM Curry Favour Crossword Competition, LM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

State your T-shirt size — small, medium or large — although we'll probably ignore this information because we're utter bastards. Closing date for entries is Friday 19 December, and we'll publish the solution in the first edition of LM (on sale 15 January, get your order in now, nail the newsagent to the floor, etc.). The prize winner will be announced in LM's second edition.

And that's it. Simple, huh?

# HOWARD JONES

## LAST WORLD DREAM LIVE IN CONCERT

**The Stunning Music Video  
Filmed At The NEC Birmingham**

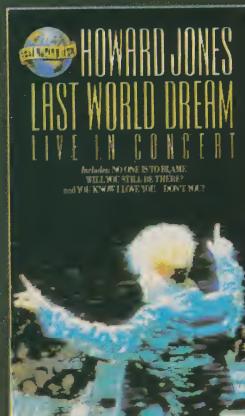
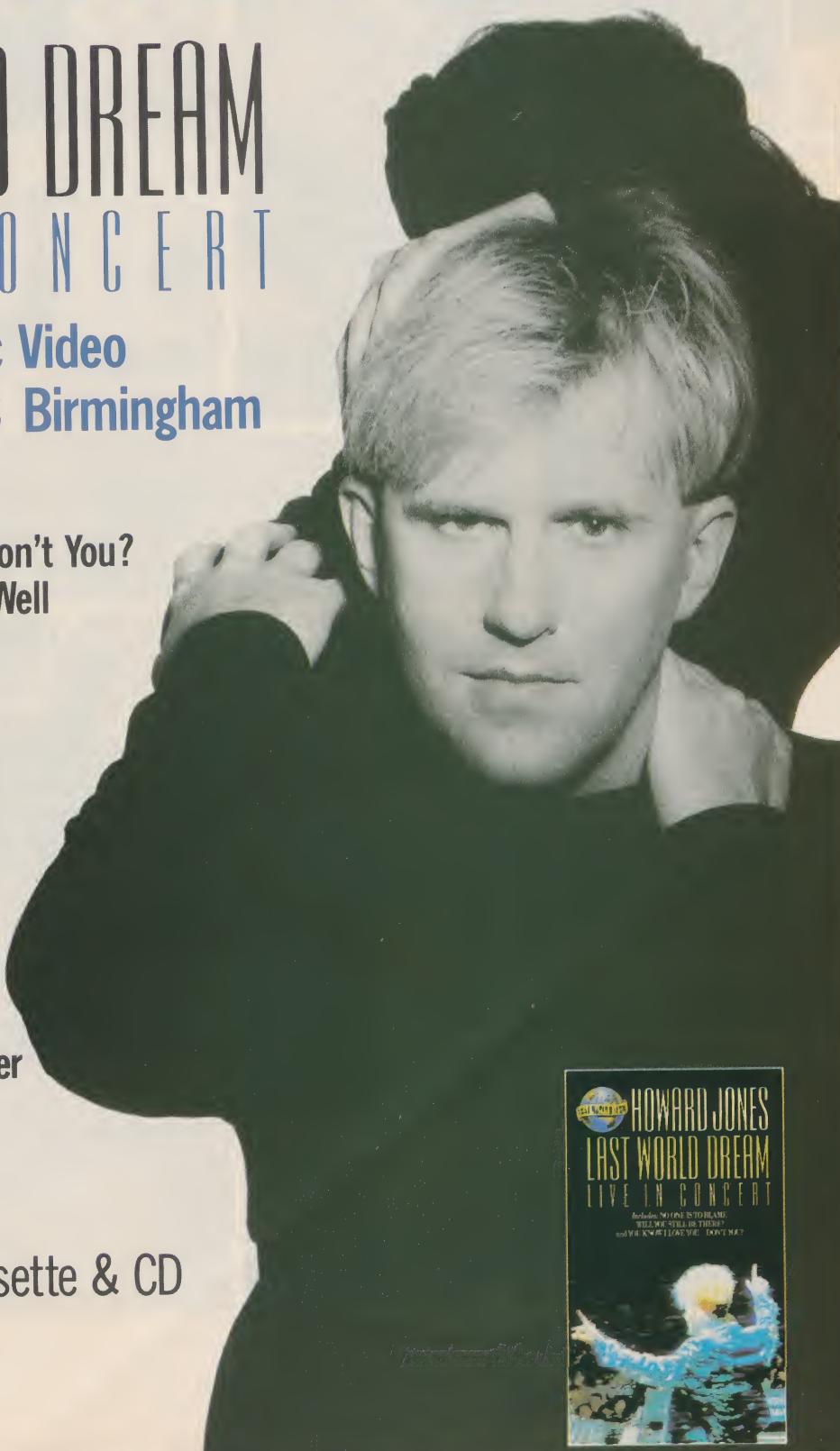
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Like To Get To Know You Well  
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Life In One Day  
Look Mama  
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